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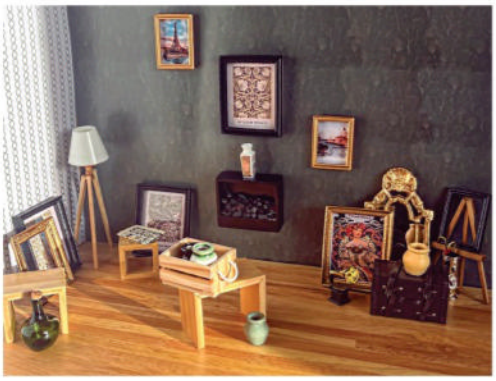

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Welcome

to the July edition!

The month of July sees the celebration of Independence Day for our friends over the pond in the USA, so to keep your mini makes right up to date with the festivities we have an American flag pie to make by Sadie Brown, plus a miniature baseball set on page 62 for that all-American feel!

Elsewhere, turn to page 26 for the final part of Moi Ali's Retro Fit Realism series – have you been following it through the last six issues? Which was your favourite part? We've had some fantastic feedback on this mini-series, you'll be pleased to know that Moi will be back with another series – this time for 12 months – very soon!

We have a new contributor to introduce you to this issue, Kim Finch, who over the coming months will be showing you how she built up the texture and details in her own dolls house, starting with this issue's project – showstopping stone walls using egg cartons!

As always, you'll find all the best advice from industry experts Bea Broadwood from Petite Properties and Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel's 'mini tips', an abundance of inspiration keeping our finger on the pulse of the miniature world, plus did you know that by signing up to our email newsletter you can get even more fabulous mini content, such exclusive top tips and projects from social media stars?! Turn to page 7 where I'll tell you more!

Finally, a massive thank you to this month's contributors; Sadie Brown, Moi Ali, Bea Broadwood, Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel, Kim Finch, Ann Evans, Ian Macaulay, Charlotte Stokoe and Lynn Allingham

Happy mini-making!

Joanne Garwell

Editor

FANATASTIC GIVEAWAYS!

TURN TO PAGES 42 & 72 TO SEE WHAT YOU COULD WIN!

Editor loves!

READY TO CELEBRATE

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4th July makes

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The final part in the series!

SNEAK PEEK… INSIDE NEXT ISSUE!

Exploring Adobe architecture

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Let us inspire you
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Find out how this Instagrammer caught the mini bug from her mother which kickstarted her lifelong love of miniatures…

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FANATASTIC GIVEAWAYS!

FOR A CHANCE TO WIN
SIMPLY VISIT
www.dollshouseandminiaturescene.co.uk

The closing date for all entries is
31st July 2023

GOOD LUCK!

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Get even more from your magazine when you join our community... there are so many ways to join, which will you choose?!

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and enjoy 20% off.
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The miniature chocolatier
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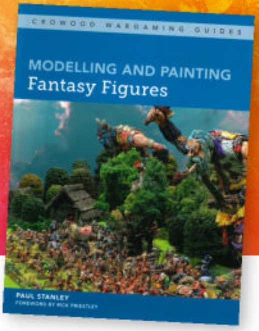
CROWOOD WARGAMING GUIDES
MODELLING AND PAINTING
Fantasy Figures
PAUL STANLEY

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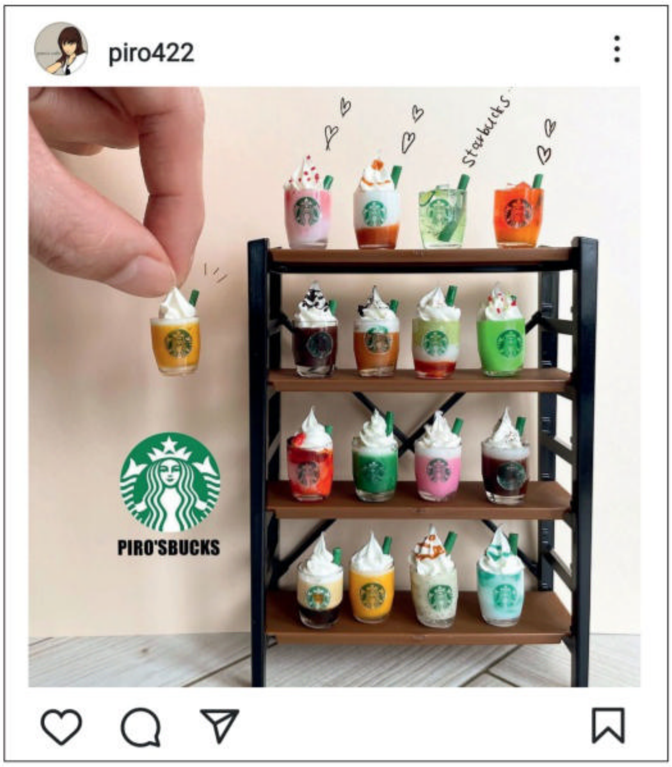
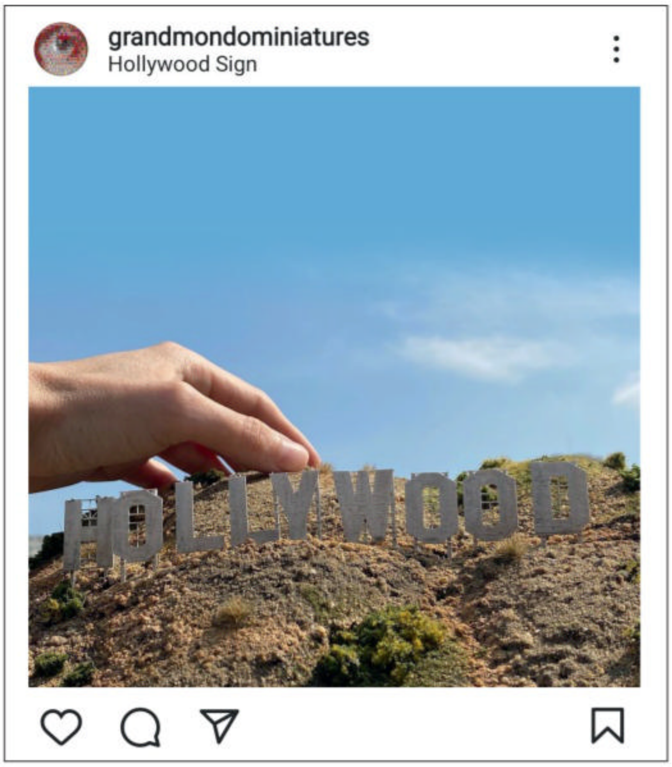
SCAN ME

Caught on camera

Here at DHMS, the team have been amazed and inspired by these mini makes as seen on Instagram - here is an American-themed selection of our finds this month...



piro422



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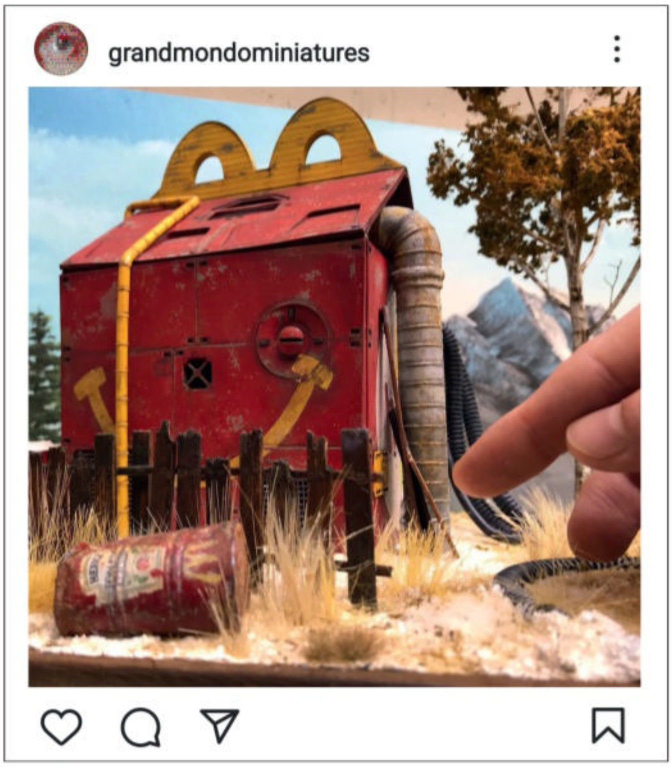
Hollywood Sign



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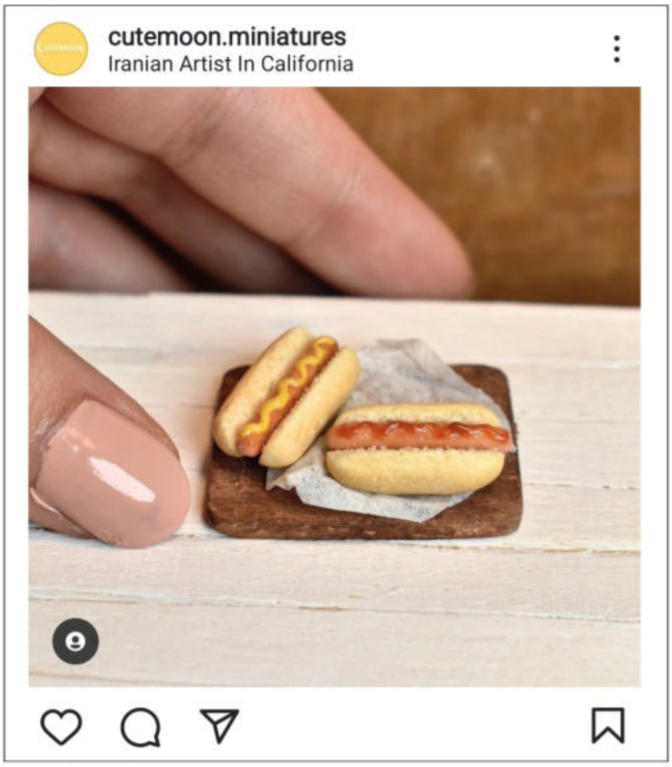
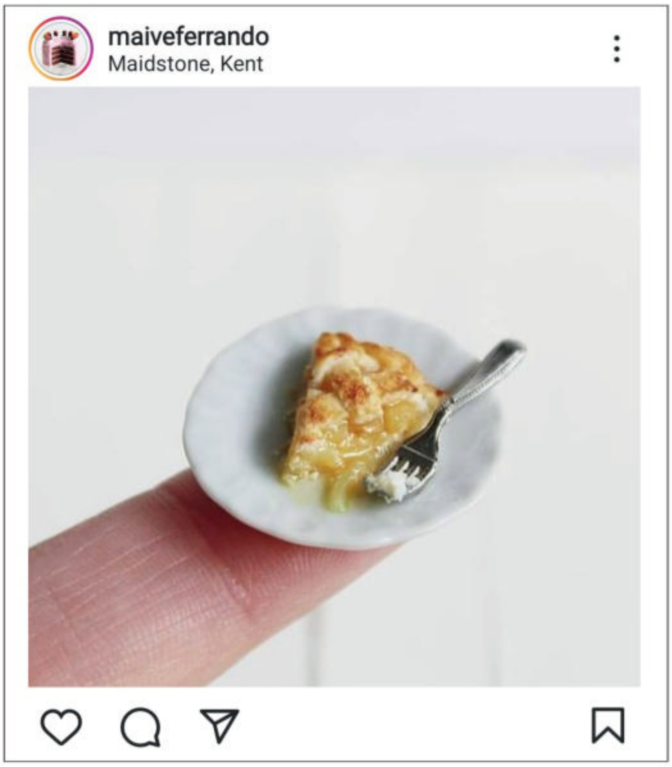


cutemoon.miniatures
Iranian Artist In California


maiveferrando
Maidstone, Kent

Cobham Antique Doll House, Doll and Toy Fair 2023

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Sunday 12th November

9.30am to 2.30pm
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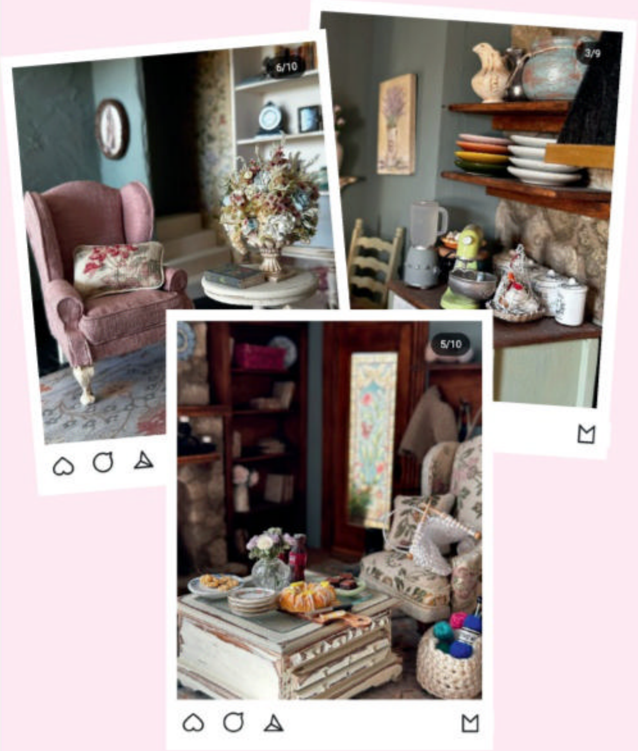
Cobham
Surrey KT11 2LU

Daniel Brookbank
Telephone: 07852 102613
Email: lewisrosiecoco@outlook.com
Facebook: Antique Doll House, Doll and Toy Fairs UK

More than a magazine!

"Here at DHMS we want to give you even more than what you see and read inside the magazine… if you sign up to our email we promise you'll not want to hit delete when they come through! We aim to bring you more projects, more inspiration and more top tips for your mini-making. Our June email just featured 'Top 5 tips for making realistic miniature food' from popular Instagrammer Mahnaz Miryani, otherwise known as Cutemoon Miniatures, and sign up now and you'll find an exclusive interview, 5 minutes with Carinne Gee of My Life in Miniature – with over 175,000 Instagram followers she's one to watch!"



"Make sure you sign up now so you don't miss all the fantastic content lined up!"

Joanne
Editor

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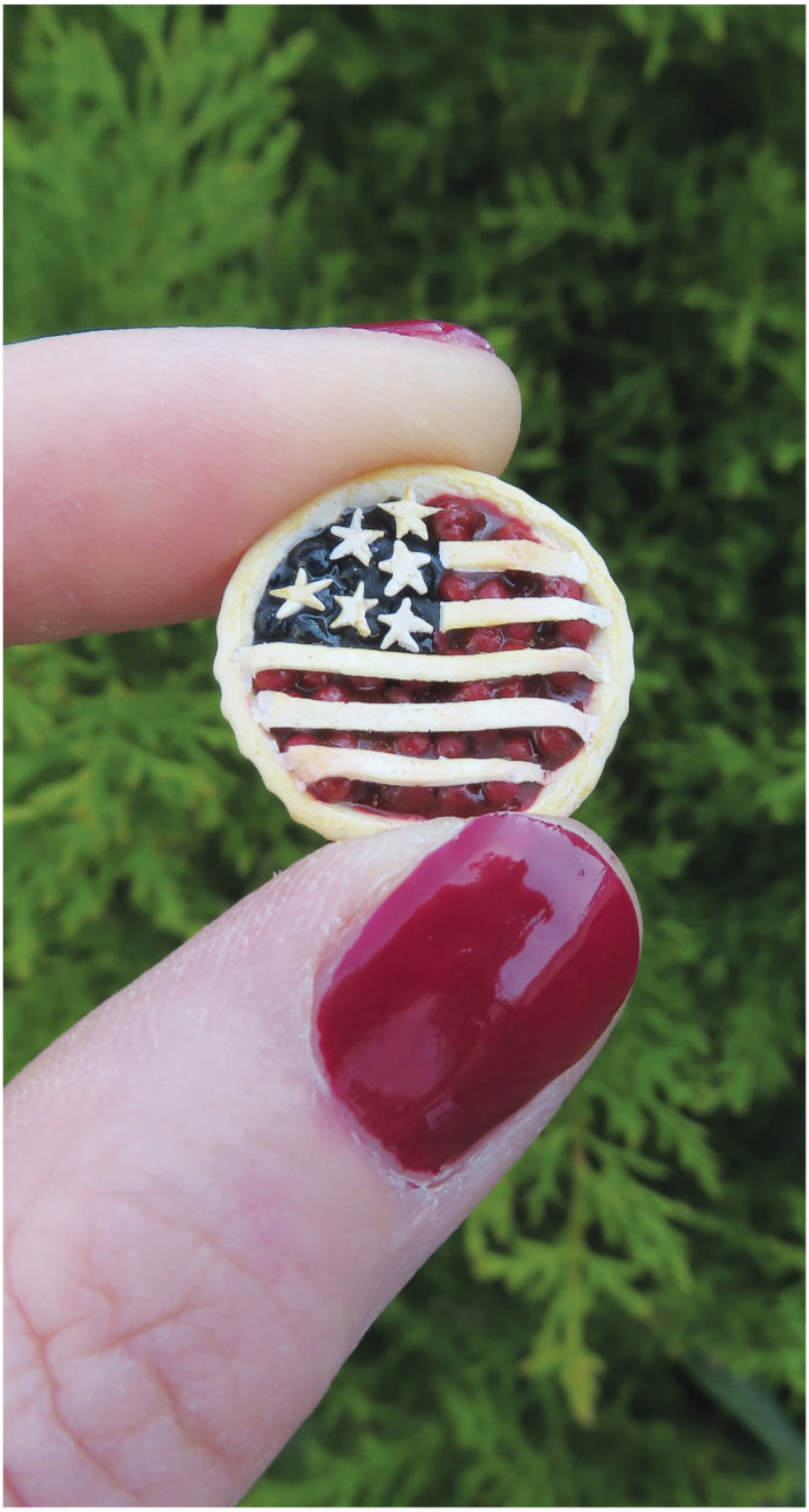
American flag pie

Make sure your 4th of July celebrations are a piece of pie this year.



YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- White, sunflower yellow, midnight blue and terracotta polymer clay
- Golden ochre, brown, dark cadmium orange, dark blue, black, pillar box red and crimson red pastels
- Gloss varnish

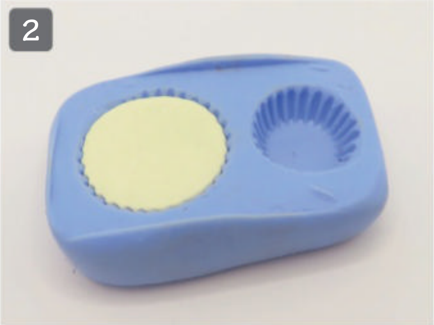
Tools required

- 1/12th scale silicone pie/flan mould
- Small paintbrushes
- Small ball tool
- Craft knife

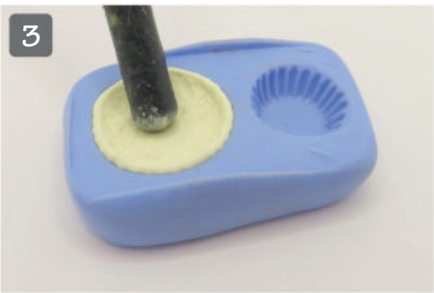
Team Top Pick!

"I love the detail in this, the cherries look so realistic!"
Emily

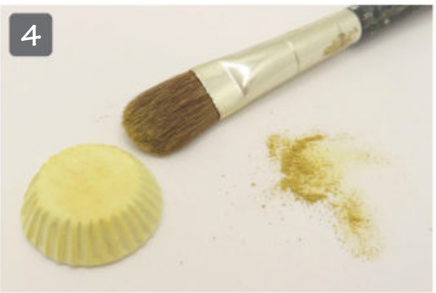
1 Mix white polymer clay with sunflower yellow to create a pale shade of cream.



2 Fill a 1/12th scale silicone pie/flan mould with some of the cream clay, ensuring that the top of the pie is completely flat.



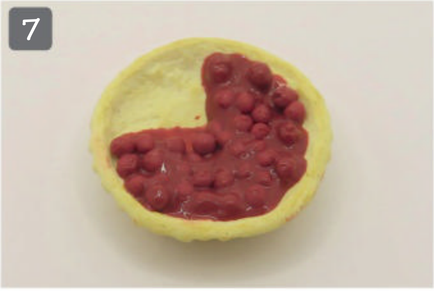
3 Use the end of a paintbrush or a small ball tool to make a hollow in the centre of the pie, creating a crust all the way around the edge and forming space for the filling.



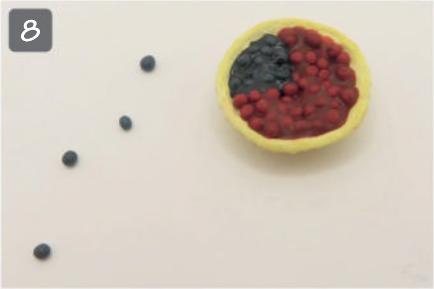
4 Mix grated golden ochre pastel with a little dark cadmium orange and brown. Carefully remove the pie from the mould and brush all over with the mixed pastel. Bake and allow to cool.

5 Mix terracotta polymer clay with grated crimson red and pillar box red pastel, making a cherry shade. Roll into balls around 2mm in diameter.

6 Mix Sculpey Bake & Bond or similar with the same grated crimson red and pillar box red pastel, along with a touch of black.

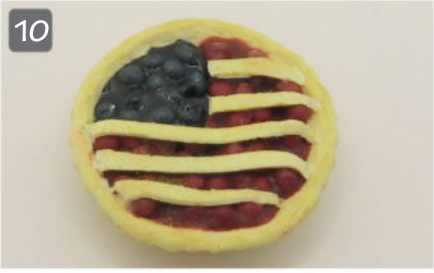


7 Spread the Bake & Bond/pastel mixture over three quarters of the pie and add the 'cherries' from step 5. Return to the oven to bake the filling.

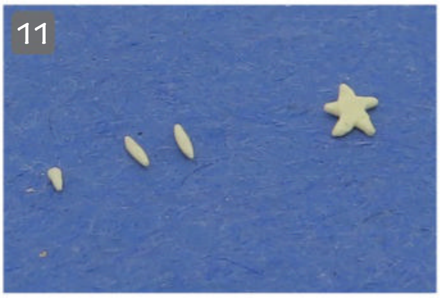


8 Mix Bake & Bond with dark blue and a little black pastel, spreading over the remaining quarter of the pie filling. Roll some tiny balls of clay in midnight blue to resemble blueberries and add these to the mixture.

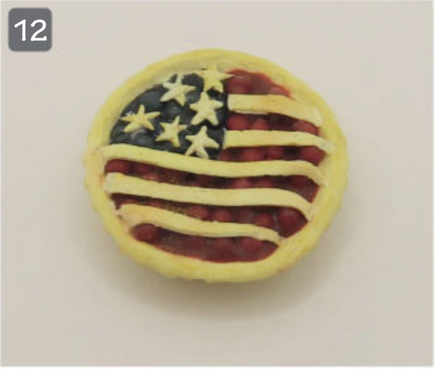
9 Roll some cream clay out roughly 1mm in thickness and cut several lengths each 2mm wide.



10 Brush each length of cream clay with the same mixture as used for the pie base. Cut five stripes to size, sticking them into position across the red section of the pie filling using Bake & Bond.



11 Roll three very tiny balls of cream clay into tubes with a point at each end, putting one over the other to form a plus sign. Create a third tube and cut in half, adding one of the pieces to the plus sign to form a fifth point. Flatten with the back of a fingernail and you should have a star shape. Repeat until you have six stars.



12 Use Bake & Bond to stick the stars to the top of the blueberry section of the pie. Return to the oven for the final time to bake the blueberry filling and the pastry stars and stripes.

13
Gloss Varnish
Glanzfirnis
Glanzende Vernis
Blank Fernissa
Vernis Brillant
75mL e

13 Use a thin tipped paintbrush to coat the pie filling with gloss varnish, being careful to avoid the pastry.

Sadie's Top Tip

"When using the grated pastel mix, vary the depth of shading to make it appear as though some areas of the pie have browned more than others. Just like the real thing!"

FEATURE *by Sadie Brown*

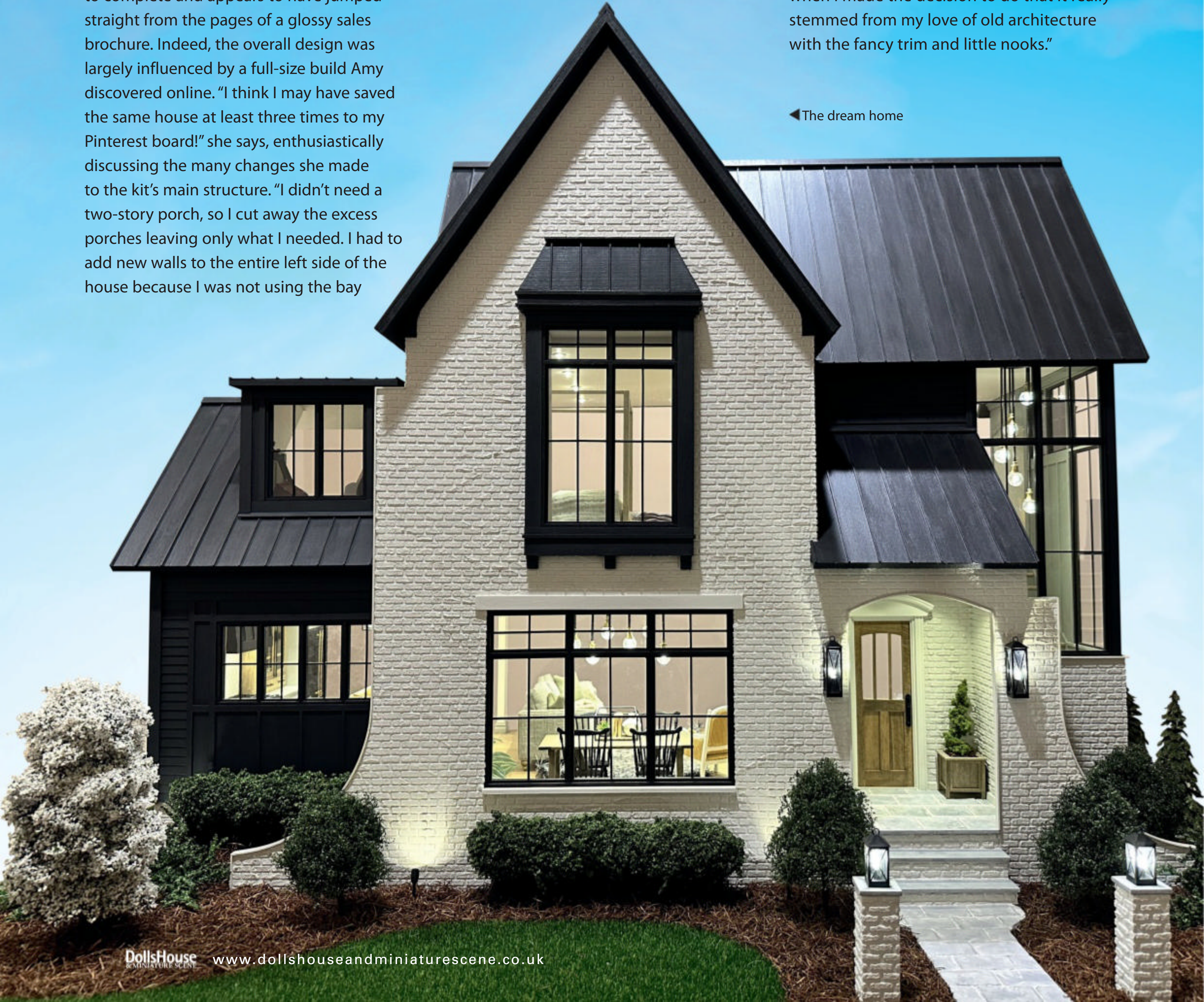
Making an entrance

Unlock your imagination as Amy Yates opens the doors to her stunning show home.

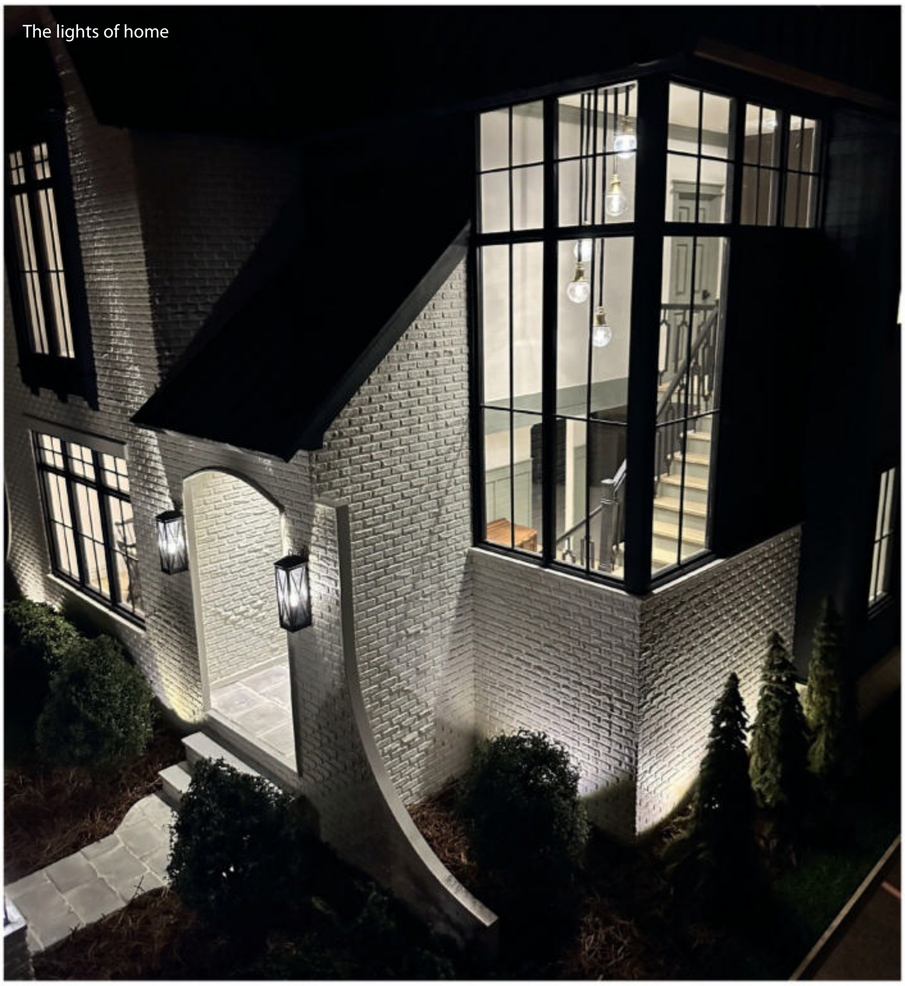
Stairway to success

A spacious executive property with bespoke kitchen and staircase, along with a beautifully landscaped garden, this exceptional house was designed and built to the owner's specifications. But this isn't an affluent development in the leafy suburbs of the home counties, it comes straight from the imagination of talented miniature architect, Amy Yates. Unrecognisable from its original form as a Victoria's Farmhouse kit, the finished build took Amy five months to complete and appears to have jumped straight from the pages of a glossy sales brochure. Indeed, the overall design was largely influenced by a full-size build Amy discovered online. "I think I may have saved the same house at least three times to my Pinterest board!" she says, enthusiastically discussing the many changes she made to the kit's main structure. "I didn't need a two-story porch, so I cut away the excess porches leaving only what I needed. I had to add new walls to the entire left side of the house because I was not using the bay component that it came with. The biggest structural change was the stair area. I knew I had to have a huge corner window, so I essentially just cut out that whole section of house. Overall, there were many changes that I made to create the look I was going for and I was extremely pleased with the results!"

Central to the design of Amy's handcrafted staircase is the fabulous alcove, which not only makes the most of what could easily have become a dead space, but with a bench seat and shelves becomes a focal point within the substantial entrance foyer. "The stairs were the first piece I built in the home. I needed to have them in place before I could put my second story on, for accessibility reasons and for being able to fit the staircase into place properly," Amy explains. "The alcove was decided pretty early on. I really like to add exterior architectural elements so that the house is more than just a flat box. So, naturally to me it made sense to do a small alcove under the stairs with a window seat. I think when I made the decision to do that it really stemmed from my love of old architecture with the fancy trim and little nooks."



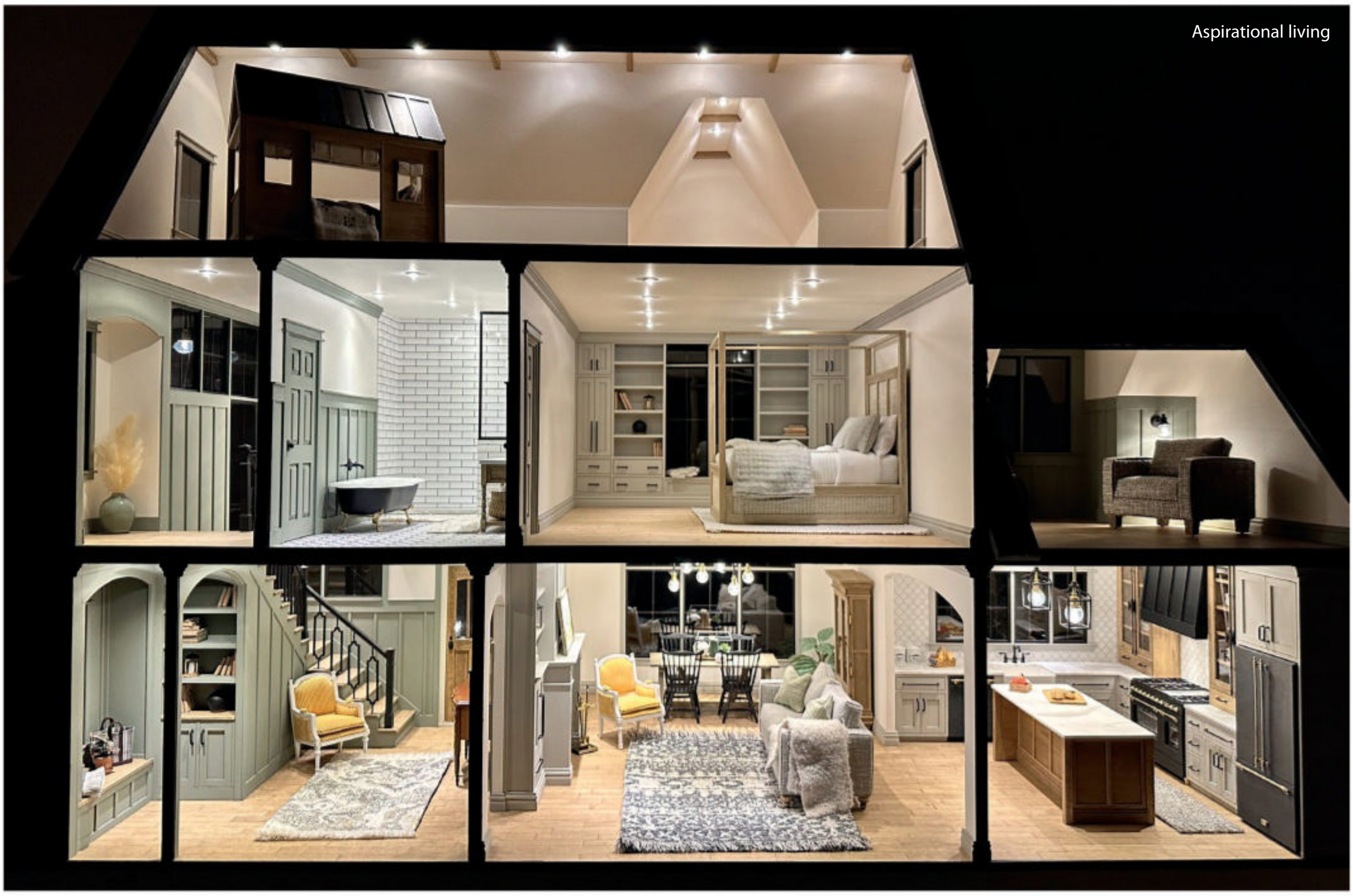
◀The dream home


The lights of home

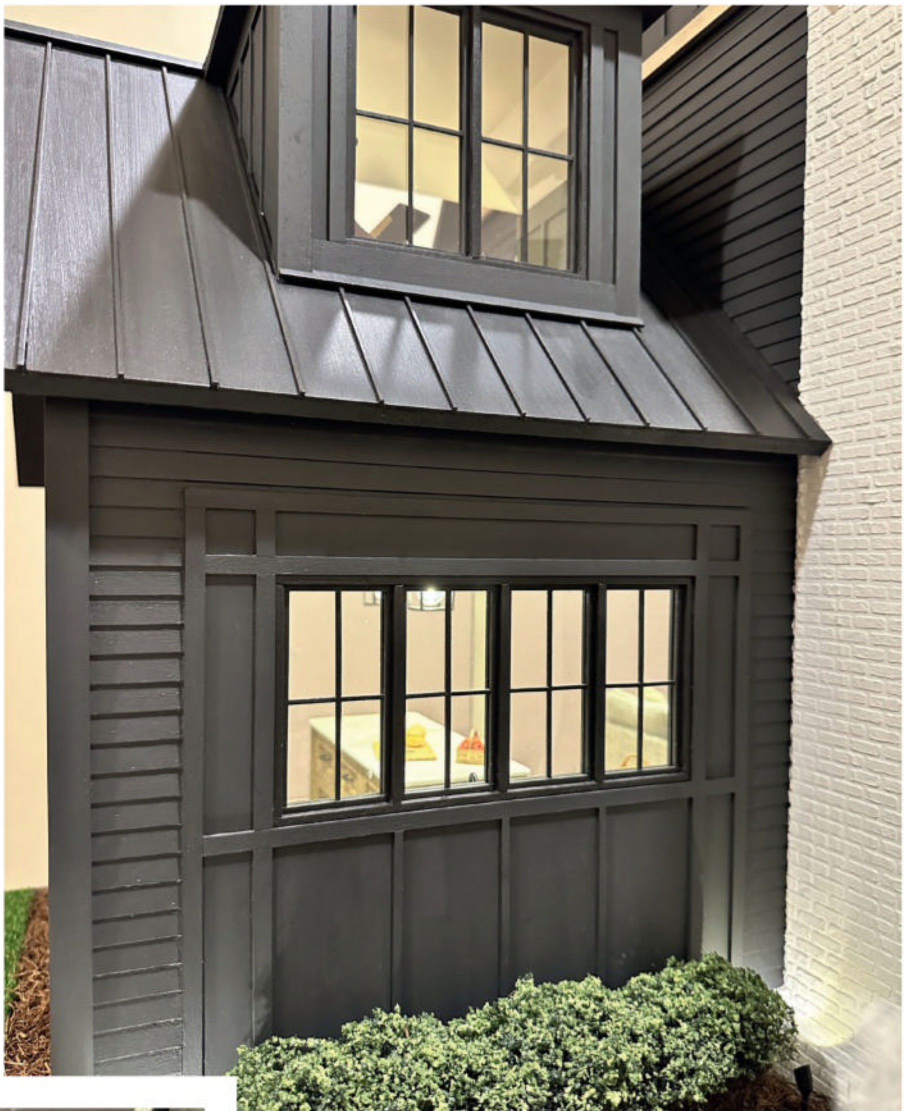
Brick by brick

The exterior architecture incorporates detailed brickwork, just one aspect which lifts the design from an exciting build to something exceptional, delivering an ultra-realistic appearance. But whilst Amy cites the staircase as the most complex aspect of the overall build, she says this was the easiest brickwork she's created to date. "The bricks were made with a system called 'Magic Brik'. Essentially, it's a stencil you lay on your piece, then you use the powder mixed with water to create the textured material that you simply smear over the stencil. It's a bit messy, but for a larger project it was such a breeze to do! I then painted my bricks with latex house paint and that was it!"

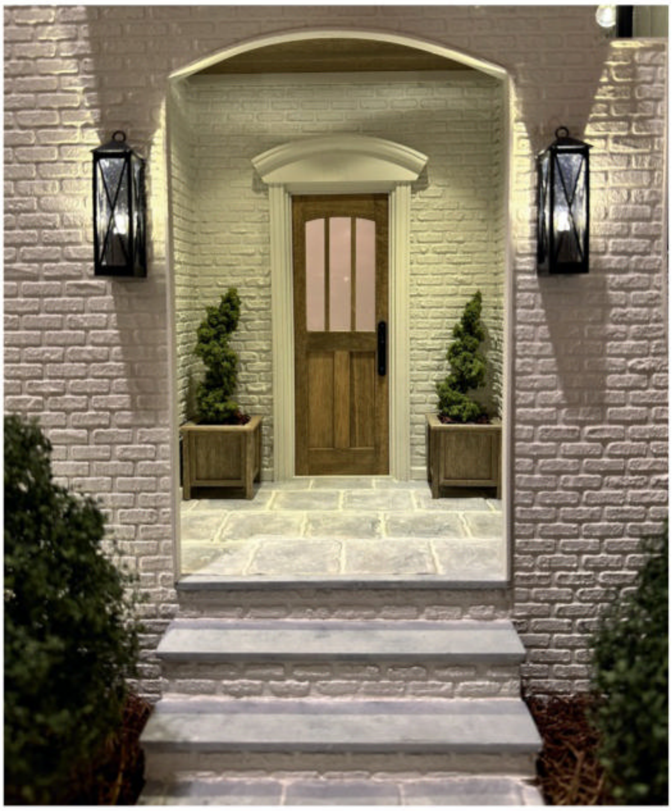
However, when it came to the interior, the design process proved much more of a challenge for Amy. Especially when it came to choosing those all-important colour schemes. "I tend to follow very neutral trends even in my own real-life home. But I really wanted this home to stand out. I draw a lot of inspiration from real life trends and honestly, I kind of just design as I go! For instance, I originally planned for the foyer to be grey, but I started painting the stairs and decided I wanted to try this beautiful green I had left over from painting my real-life guest rooms, and that's how the green foyer happened! I also knew


Aspirational living

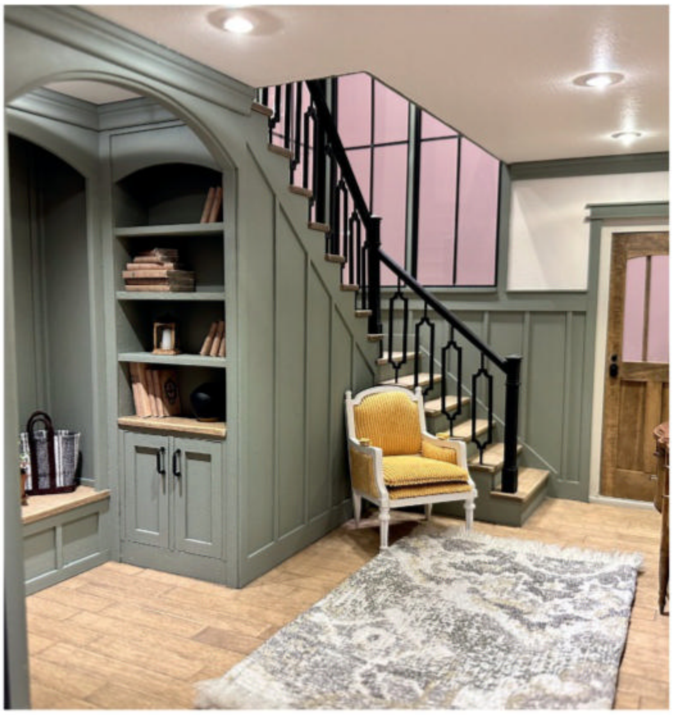
that I wanted white walls, but I didn't want the home to feel bland, so I used the grey trim to keep it neutral, but classy." The open plan living space, complete with large kitchen island, is the ultimate in aspirational design, and the lighting throughout the house is outstanding. The staircase is illuminated by a five-drop centrepiece pendant light, framed from the outside by the huge floor to ceiling windows. Similarly fabulous light fittings hang above the rustic dining table and kitchen island, but it isn't only the décor which Amy turned her creative hand to. The comfortable sofa and contemporary design four poster bed are just two of the many Amy Yates originals. As is the toilet. Yes, that's right, the toilet! A talented 3D print artist, Amy is of the firm belief that 3D printing is a massive game changer for the world of miniatures. "It allows miniaturists to create detailed pieces that would otherwise be unavailable or extremely difficult to make," she explains, the toilet being a case in point. Amy also adds that she's all too aware this relatively new artform has its critics, who prefer to stick exclusively to more traditional handcrafting skills. "It's a learning curve and form of art all on its own. I design all my own 3D models, and that is harder than it looks! As a miniaturist who loves realism, it allows me to add pieces that are highly detailed and realistic to my scenes."



▶ The view from the garden



▼ A step forward for miniature design



▲ How many homes have a bespoke staircase?

▲The enviable kitchen

◀Open plan living

▼An illuminating idea

Open house

A fantastic achievement, the house had its moment in the spotlight last year, receiving a rapturous reception when it flung open its doors to become a real-life show home at the biggest miniatures show on the east coast of the United States, Philadelphia Miniatura. "I brought the house with me as my 'showcase' piece. I did use it to stage some furniture, but the home was also for sale. It didn't sell there, but a big part of me was ok bringing it home and keeping it for my own collection!" admits Amy, who, for the first time, also taught her own workshop at the show. Giving students the opportunity to build a gorgeous pergola with 'stone' floor, Amy describes it as an amazing experience, but does concede that being a first-time teacher was nerve wracking! "All of my students were amazing and went home with gorgeous projects that I think they were all pretty proud of! I will not be teaching again at this year's show. I am taking some time to figure out what direction I want to go and to spend some much-needed time with my family!"

Having recently completed a 1/24th build, designed from scratch with the help of 'Betty Blue', Amy's brand-new laser cutter, the house incorporates yet another fabulous staircase. However, family will always remain at the heart for Amy's love for miniature art, the roots of her fascination with small scale in the foundations of a beautiful dolls house inherited from her aunt. "It's a massive Victorian style home made by Real Good Toys. My aunt purchased it in the 1980's I believe. It looks like the 'First Lady' kit, but I believe Real Good Toys also duplicated that home as 'Victoria's Choice', where you could add additions as you wanted. It's currently in my hobby room sitting unfinished in the corner. Like my aunt, I cannot decide how I want to finish the exterior. I think I have repainted it at least three different times now and nothing is jumping out at me as a keeper. I would definitely like to get back to working on it soon, but it's such a huge undertaking!" It is one that it seems certain Amy will return to. After all, as her magnificent show home proves, dreams are made in miniature.

Soaking up luxury

At the top of the stairs

The attic makes the perfect hideaway

INFO

For more information visit:

www.instagram.com/littlevintagelaneminiatures

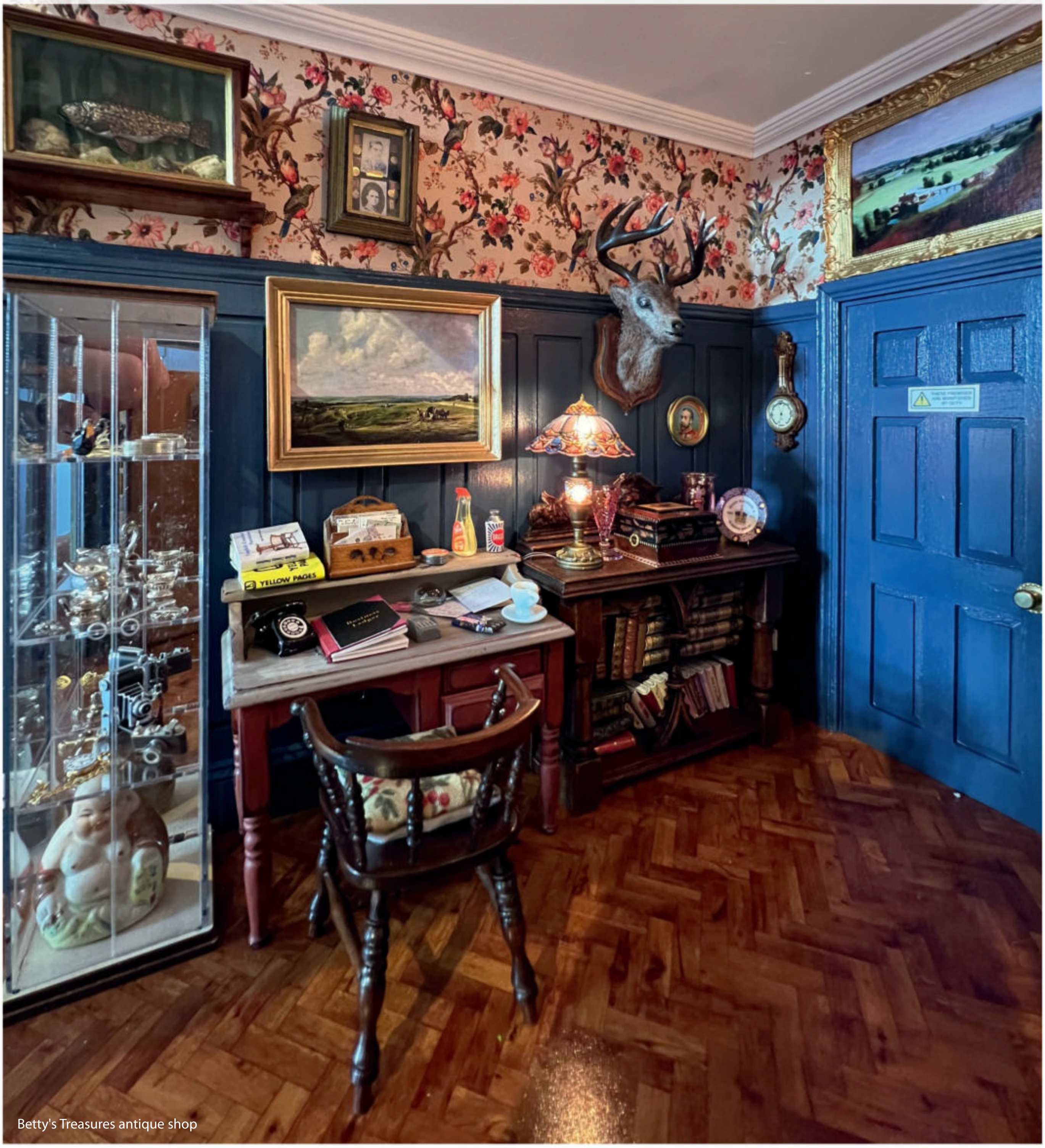
Making an entrance

DIGITAL EXTRAS

Instagram identities:

@SUE_CARSON_1ST

Sue Carson caught the mini bug from her mother, as she explained to Moi Ali.



Betty's Treasures antique shop

BETTY'S TREASURES
COLLECTIBLES
56

Irresistable antiques

▲Top floor of Betty's Treasures

◀Inside the antique shop

"I blame my mum!" laughed Sue Carson, a miniaturist from a village near Chester, just inside the Welsh border, when I asked how she discovered this wonderful hobby. "She was a headteacher in Hampshire and in her downtime liked to make little shops; an antique shop, deli, toy shop, greengrocers and more. Whenever we visited, I'd peep inside and admire how real they looked! At that time, in the late '80s, I didn't have a dolls house. When mum retired and my parents moved back to Chester, I'd accompany her to local dolls house shows. There used to be one at Chester racecourse. I loved looking at the wonderful things people made and began to wish I had one of my own."

Sue bought a large, ready-made black and white house, then discovered the Miniatura show. "Mum and I embarked on our very first visit to the NEC. I'll never forget that moment when we walked into the hall for the first time and saw just how huge the show was back then, with so many talented craftspeople. I was absolutely hooked! We made our twice-yearly trip for many years, and would meet up for coffee and a 'show and tell' every couple of hours. Great fun and lots of happy memories."

As you can see from the photos, Sue is a real connoisseur when it comes to her miniatures and only the finest pieces will do. She explained: "Seeing perfectly scaled miniatures at fairs made me quite fussy – for instance, a painted piece of aluminium that looked like a toothbrush would no longer do – it had to be a real brush with proper bristles."

In her mission to find perfection in miniature, Sue sometimes has to commission a piece: "When you commission someone to make something especially for you, I love that connection with the maker, knowing that they've spent their time and effort (and possibly some tears of frustration) working on something that will be unique! The artist in me really appreciates the love and care that goes into making something individual."

If it isn't already apparent from her fine displays, Sue is indeed an artist (in every sense of the word). After gaining a degree in textile design and a short career doing ecclesiastical embroidery and teaching art, she went into primary education. "I'm retired now," she told me, "But as an early years teacher, I would sometimes tell the children in my class stories about a Mrs Teeny Tiny Lady who lived in a little house in my garden. I would take some of my miniatures in as props. Did the children think she would like a pair of pink slippers by Susan Lee for her birthday? Or I'd show them a minuscule bunch of keys by Jane Newman that I was worried about losing while Mrs Teeny Tiny Lady was on holiday. Their faces were a delight to see as they gazed on these perfect little miniatures, fully immersed in the belief that I really did have a tiny lady living in my garden!"

Sue's collection includes a large dolls house built from at Barnsdale Manor Kit: "I've renamed it Houghland Hall," she explained, "after ancestors from the Chester area (family history is another interest of mine). It houses pieces by well-known makers, such as Stokesay Ware, Alan and Barbara Barnes, Chris Malcolmson, Malcolm Hall, Mike Sparrow and many others, which I've collected over the last 20-plus years."

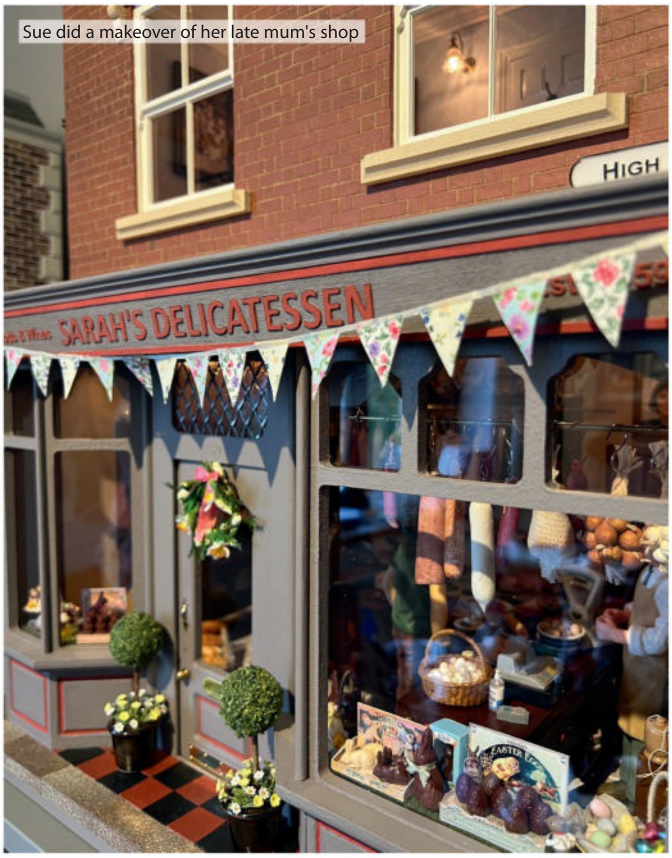
She continued: "I also have a cosy Cotswolds-style cottage, which is a 1/12th Hurstwood by Bromley Craft Products. And I've several roomboxes – a gentlemen's study, a Christmas scene, a café and a wartime sitting room. I've recently restored two Sid Cook shops that I inherited from mum. I had to sell several houses, including my original one when I retired and downsized, but that's not stopped me recently buying a very large cottage by Graham Wood of Little Homes of England, which was for sale locally, as well as another kit – a Jenny Wren shop, which I'm hoping will eventually become a toy shop, when I can squeeze some space in my work room to build it! I've also got a Gypsy caravan, currently residing in a box while I make my mind up how I'm going to decorate it. I began painting it in traditional colours, but have developed a sudden severe longing to do something Harry Potter-ish with it instead! I can see carnivorous plants in the panniers on the side rather than hens!"

As we chat, I feel that Sue has been blessed with an idyllic lifestyle, but that's not correct, as she explained: "One of my sons has Down's Syndrome and heart problems, and in his late teens was additionally diagnosed with bipolar and autism. When he left school, I retired early to become his full-time carer. Shortly afterwards, my husband suddenly became seriously ill – he's okay now – and my mum was diagnosed with Alzheimer's."

During those hard times, the dolls house hobby was a lifeline for Sue. "It was massively important in providing me with a home-based hobby that helped me to escape my cares and worries. Quietly occupied building, measuring, cutting, painting and decorating little rooms, all the while listening to a story on my tablet helped me to cope and manage the anxiety and depression that troubled me at that time, and it kept me in a positive happy place all the way through the pandemic. I find that a few hours with my dolls houses, changing seasonal scenes, or moving things around, or making some new bedding, and my mind is reset - I feel a sense of calm and contentment, whatever else is going on. It began as an outlet for my creativity, but I've come to realise how very important it is for my well-being too." So much of what Sue says will resonate with readers.

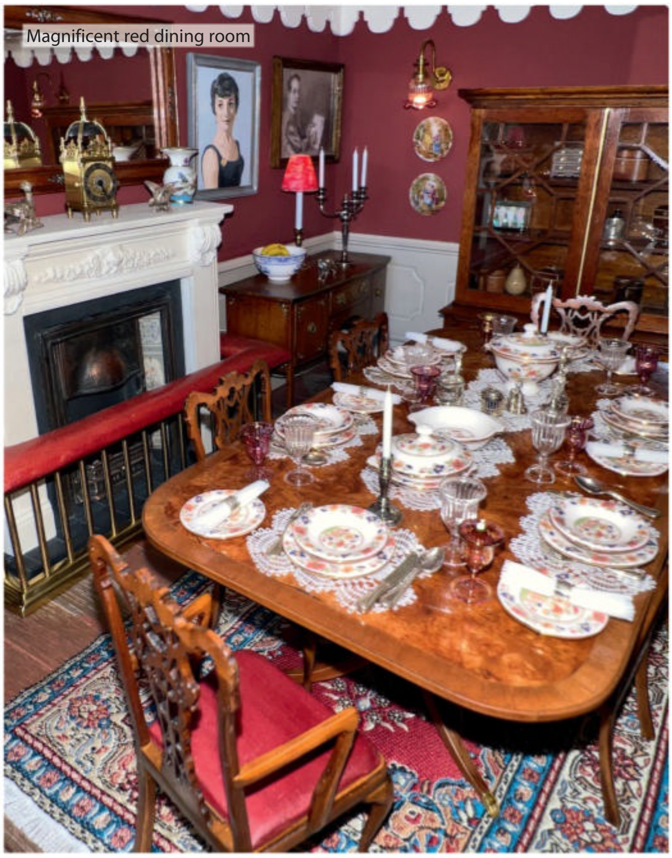
> "I find that a few hours with my dolls houses, changing seasonal scenes, or moving things around… and my mind is reset - I feel a sense of calm and contentment"

Sue says she is very lucky to have a local dolls house club that meets monthly, just a few miles from her home, where she can meet up with other miniaturists.

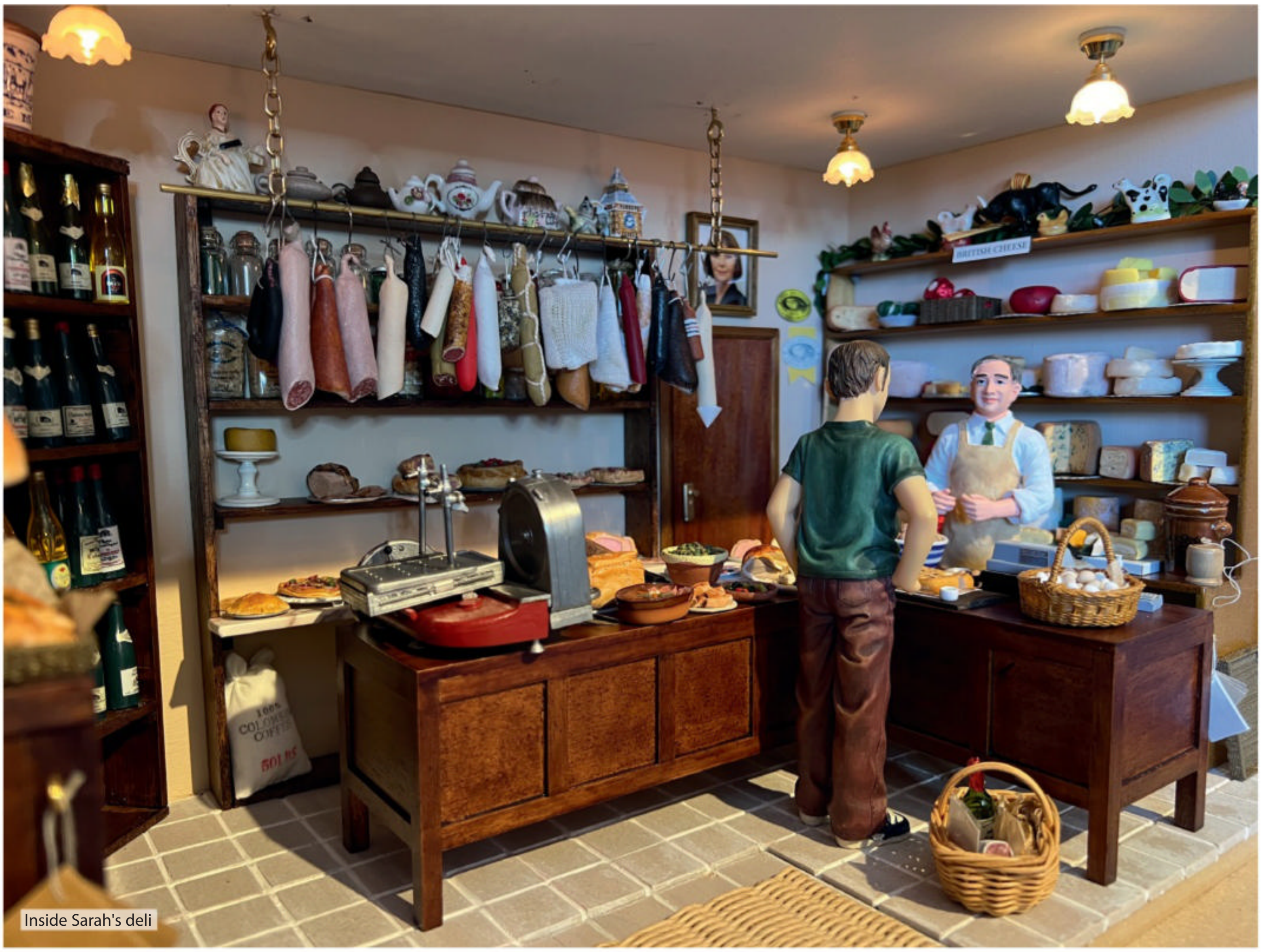


Sue did a makeover of her late mum's shop

SARAH'S DELICATESSEN
HIGH
EASTER

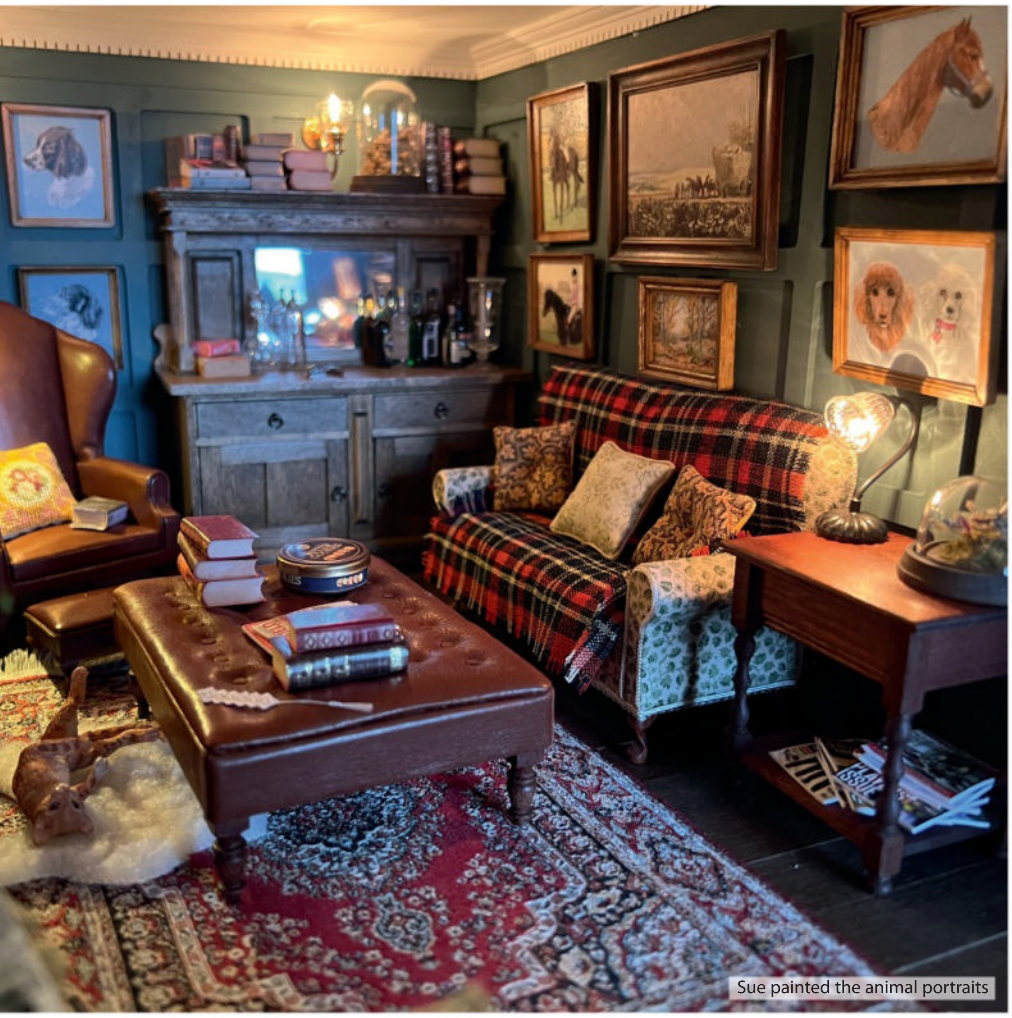


Magnificent red dining room



Inside Sarah's deli

BRITISH CHEESE

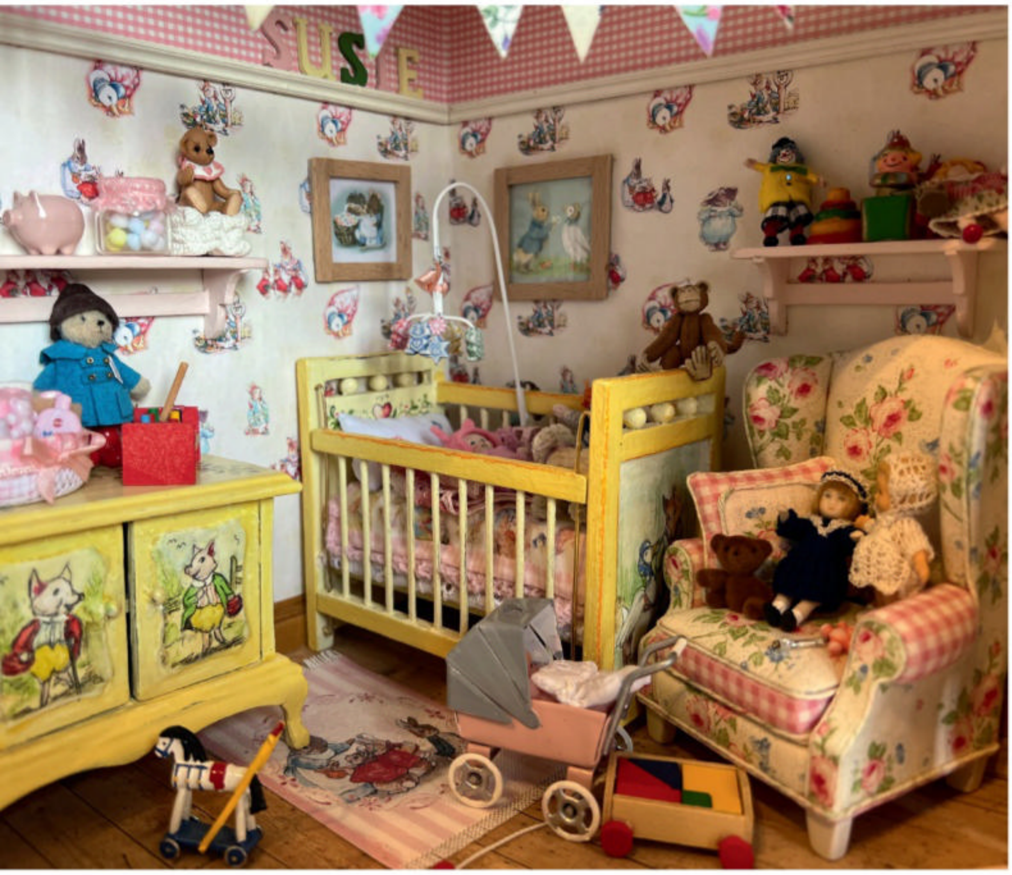

Sue painted the animal portraits

She is also lucky to have a supportive husband: "He accompanied me the first time I went to Kensington Dollshouse Festival, and enjoyed chatting to some of the makers, plus he has since been to York and Miniatura with me as well. He listens very patiently while I talk about miniatures, because he knows I'll listen to him in turn nattering on about carp fishing! We went to an antique fair last year and I bought a set of tiny broken figures for 50p which I thought would look like ancient relics for my antique shop. The stallholder must have been a bit puzzled by my purchase, but later I overheard my husband explaining to him about my dolls houses and very proudly telling him all about them and how detailed they were."

Talking of broken items, Sue has even used broken jewellery belonging to past relatives in her scenes. Silver clogs from an old charm bracelet and an amber shoe that was on a chain make excellent ornaments. A broken cameo brooch and a photo of a great uncle in a pendant are perfect pictures.

As you might expect, Sue has many fans of her work – and not just on Instagram. Sue told me: "One of my closest friends, who is an artist, came round to visit me after the lockdowns eased and went up to have a look in my work room. She peered into my big dolls house, then turned to look at me and said "You're quite mad you know, but in a lovely way." I think that probably sums me up fairly well! Then there was the electrician who was doing some work for us, who got down on his hands and knees, and stared into the dolls house for a long time, totally awestruck by the miniature furniture and tiny things inside."

The mini bug was picked up from her mum, but Sue looks set to pass it on to her two granddaughters: "The youngest is still a baby, but the eight-year-old always asks to see the dolls houses when she visits." Hooray – we need a new generation of little people who love little things!


◀ Adorable nursery

▼ Here kitty kitty

Instagram identities:

@SUE_CARSON_1ST

Maltesers
marie claire
HOMES

Kensington Dollshouse Festival

The dust has settled on another great show at Kensington Town Hall. This is the 38th year of this very special event and even train strikes could not stop dolls house enthusiasts travelling from all over the UK and the world to view the incredible miniatures on show. As event organiser and curator Charlotte Stokoe recalls…

LDF debut award

▲ LDF Debut Winner Live a Little

Something that we have been promoting for the last 12 months is our commitment to finding new and talented makers for our shows. For this reason, we joined forces with Emma Waddell of Dolls House Grand Designs to offer a new award for new craftsmen attending our shows. This took in all new makers from the Christmas Show in 2022 and our Summer Show in May. We are pleased to say we had a total of 39 new stands at these shows and picking a winner was a tough job. We wanted to support a business that we felt would be around for a long time and who had really thought about what they were selling and how they were promoting their business.

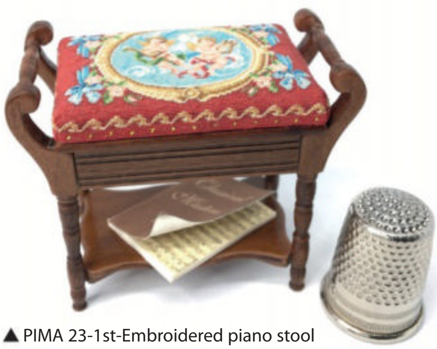
We were pleased to present the trophy to "LIVE A LITTLE MINIATURES". Based in Canada, they travelled all the way to London with their handmade chandeliers and handbags (two things that you can never have enough of!). They won a free table at one of our shows in 2024 plus £500 to go towards the costs of attending a show.

Perfection in Miniature Awards 2023

Alongside the Debut Award, we had the 8th Perfection in Miniatures Awards taking place. What an incredible competition this was this year. Such a wide range of miniatures entered; it made judging this year very difficult as everyone had a different favourite!

The winners were:

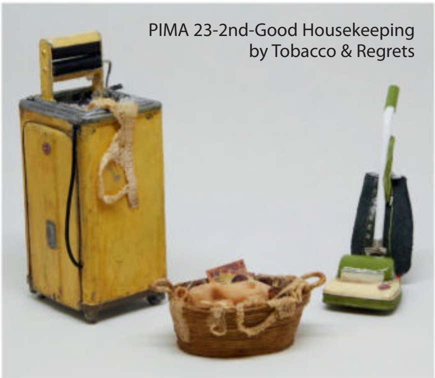
1st place:



▲ PIMA 23-1st-Embroidered piano stool by Nicola Mascall & Masters Miniatures

Nicola Mascall and Masters Miniatures with their Edwardian piano stool with embroidered lid.

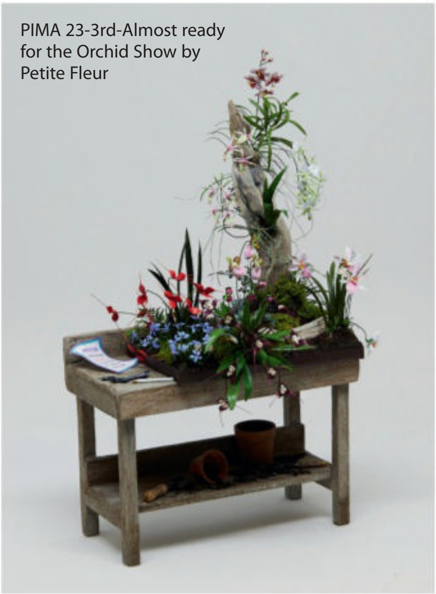
2nd place:



PIMA 23-2nd-Good Housekeeping by Tobacco & Regrets

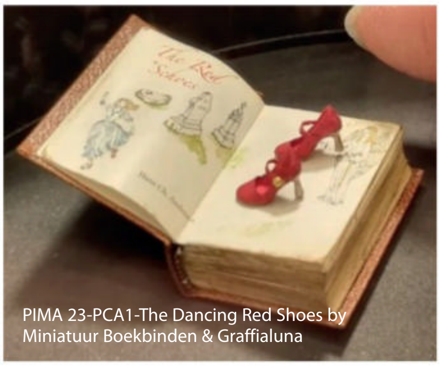
Abi Trotman of Tobacco and Regrets with 'Good Housekeeping', a selection of 1950's household appliances.

3rd place:



PIMA 23-3rd-Almost ready for the Orchid Show by Petite Fleur

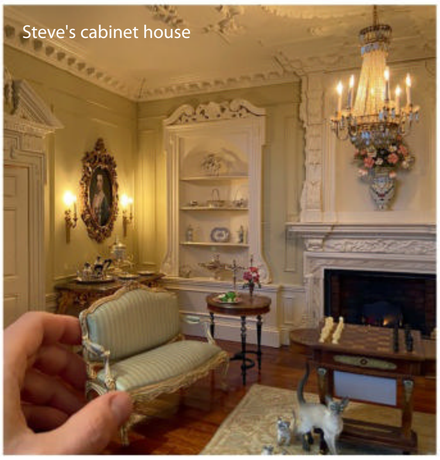
Gill Rawlings of Petite Fleur with 'Almost Ready for the Orchid Show', a beautiful display of orchids, made from brass and handpainted.



PIMA 23-PCA1-The Dancing Red Shoes by Miniatuur Boekbinden & Graffialuna

The 'People's Choice Award' went to Tine Krijnen and Valeria Bonomi who made a moving automata of 'The Dancing Red Shoes'. These perfectly formed red shoes move as if by magic accompanied by a piano tune (played by Tine herself).

Houses on display

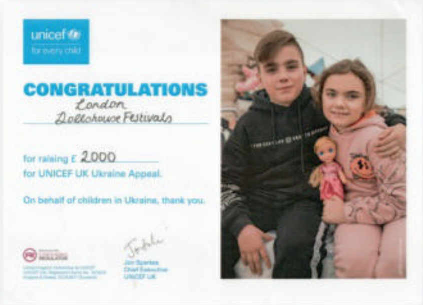

Steve's cabinet house

One of the highlights of the show was the beautiful Cabinet House created by Steve Putnam. Steve is a regular visitor to our show and we were pleased to finally be able to persuade him to pack up his incredible dolls house and bring it to Kensington for us all to admire.

Amy's painted house

We also had a small but unique house created by Amy Balfour. Her unique decorative style is so fresh and gave inspiration to so many visitors.

UNICEF for Ukraine


unicef
for every child

CONGRATULATIONS
London
Dollshouse Festivals

for raising £ 2000
for UNICEF UK Ukraine Appeal.

On behalf of children in Ukraine, thank you.

Once again we raised money for UNICEF and their work in Ukraine at the show. We had our popular 'Lucky Drawers' which were filled with beautiful miniatures donated by our exhibitors. We also had a couple of vintage box shops up for auction, donated by The Pig Style. I am pleased to announce we raised £2000 – our best total ever, I think.

KENSI GTON
DOLLS OUSE

▲ Gingerbread Craft Club

Children's activities

As always we want to get the young visitors to our shows involved too. The Marvellous Mouse Hunt was running throughout the show and over 50 children took part in this activity that has become such a KDF tradition. We also opened the doors to the Gingerbread Craft Club again. Children could make mini packaging for their dolls houses, with the help of some printouts designed for us by Shepherd Miniatures. Others dressed some peg dolls – always a popular activity for a certain age group.

Show highlights

- KDF Exhibitors old and new all brought some incredible work for us to view.
- Mulvany and Rogers brought an old dolls house they had made a few years ago and had spent time restoring and refurbishing.
- New Exhibitor Karen Wosley brought a great display of her hand painted ceramic vases.
- New exhibitor Floral Décor Mini finally made it to the show from Spain with her gorgeous flowers and plants
- unner up in the LDF Debut Award was Miniature Dream Homes, a new dolls house builder from the UK who is creating authentic English houses and cottages.
- ELF Miniatures brought some contemporary design to the show with some stunning modern bathrooms & kitchens
- Yosh Sagi travelled to the show from Belgium; it is always a privilege to be able to view his stunning handmade furniture in person.
- Everyone was in love with Make It Small Miniatures' gorgeous clothes ready to fill all those empty dolls house wardrobes.
- We were delighted to have Bjarnesonns back at the show from Canada with his beautiful dogs, cats and other beasts.
- The Miniature Needlework Society were back too and celebrating 25 years.
- Gale Elena Bantock always has a beautiful display of dolls and dioramas. She certainly did not disappoint this year.

More events in 2023 from London Dollshouse Festivals:

LDF Online Showcase:
4th-10th September 2023. Access via our website

KDF Christmas Show:
2nd December, Kensington Town Hall
Information on all our shows plus more details on the Perfection in Miniature Award winners and much more, visit our website
www.dollshouseshowcase.com

RETRO-FIT REALISM: THE LAST PART IN THE SERIES!

COMMERCIAL PREMISES

In the final part of Moi Ali's mini-series, it's all in the detail…

In this series I've focussed on the little touches that bring a dolls house to life and add realism – whether it's a pile of upswept leaves that have gathered in a doorway, or bird poo on a chimney pot! The same rules apply for your miniature commercial premises – your shops, cafes and pubs. Add in miniatures from what you see in the full-size world, and thereby create scenes that are miniature masterpieces.

Starting outside, most miniature premises benefit from the addition of the clutter and detail of a real shopfront. Here you'll find some projects to help you add the architectural and other detailing that will bring your commercial premises to life.

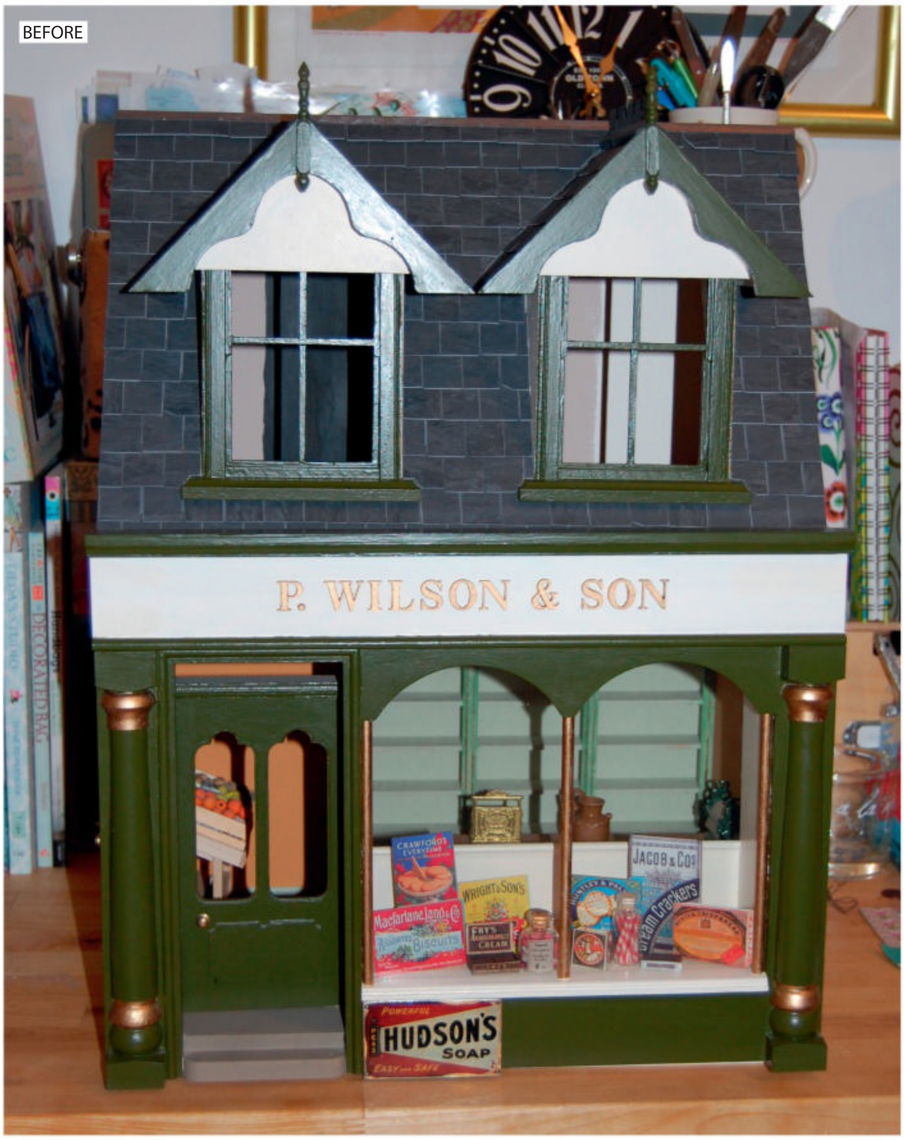
I have used my own Anglesey shop to demonstrate some of these techniques, as it was too plain and uninspiring. Adapt the projects to add a touch of realism to your shopfront!

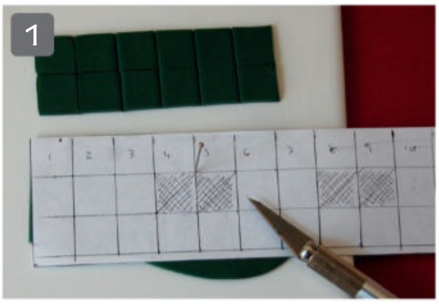
Tiles and airbricks

YOU WILL NEED

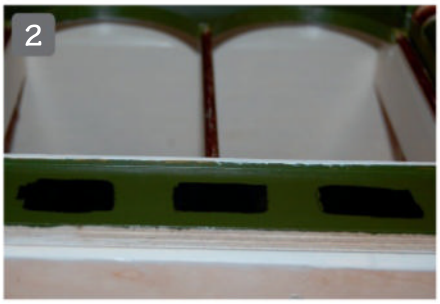
Materials required

- *Polymer clay*
- *Grout*
- *Glue*
- *Plastic tapestry canvas*
- *Gloss varnish & paint*
- *Plastic railing and other decorative additions (e.g. wooden urns, gold stickers)*

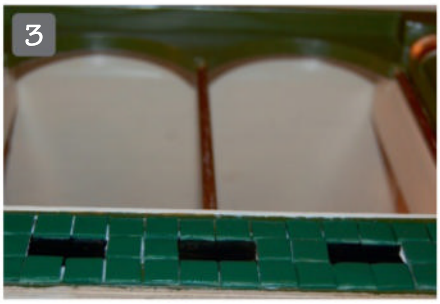

BEFORE



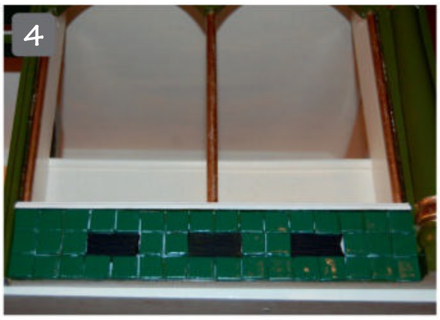
1 Roll out polymer clay thinly. Draw a template showing the position of tiles and airbricks. Use a pin to prick out the intersections onto the clay. Use this as your guide to cut out tiles from the clay. Now bake.



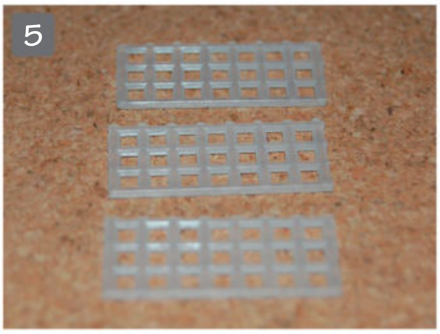
2 Paint the area that will have air bricks black.



3 Glue tiles in place, leaving space for the air bricks. The tiles will look matt and messy, but don't worry (steps 4 and 7 will transform them).



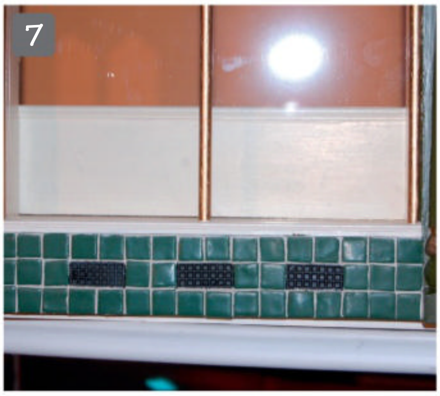
4 Apply gloss varnish suitable for polymer clay to the tiles. This will give them a realistic ceramic appearance.



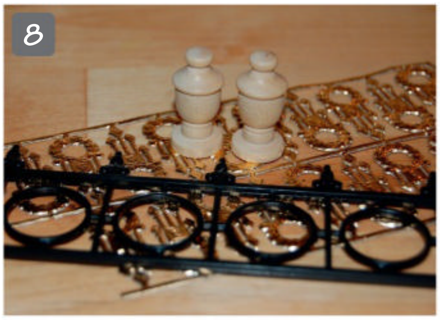
5 Cut air bricks from plastic canvas.

IVORY
BLACK

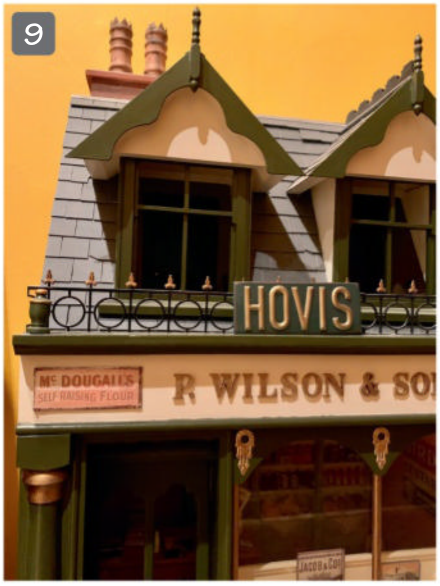
6 Paint the airbricks black.



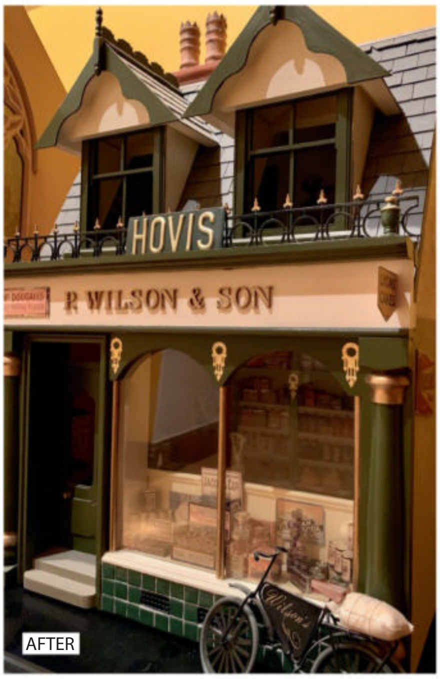
7 Grout the tiles using ready mixed grout, wiping away excess grout with a damp cloth, then glue the air bricks in place.



8 Take plastic railing, wooden urns and gold stickers – or any other decorative elements you fancy – and work out where they will go on your shopfront.



9 Paint the railing gloss black with gold details, and paint the urns to match the shop front. Glue in place, and add gold stickers too.



Rusty vintage sign

Old corner shops were absolutely covered in advertising – both advertising hoardings and enamel signs (the type that have become very collectible and valuable today). Just look at photos taken at the time and you will see just how much commercial clutter there was! I used fridge magnets of old signs on my hardware shop, but they look a bit too shiny and new and I shall have to do something with them. Thanks to the good old British weather, real enamel signs were prone to rust. This project shows how to make a rusty sign, but it can also be used to make pristine ones.

WILSON
STREET
Rowntree's
CHOCOLATES
Wilson's

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

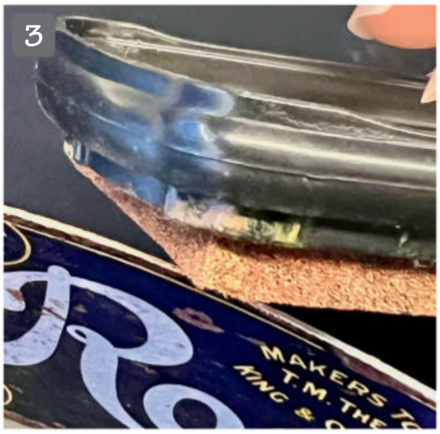
- Printed image of an old sign
- Medium weight cardboard
- Glue (PVA and superglue gel)
- Brown inkpad
- Brown and orange paint
- Spray varnish
- Bicarbonate of soda

Rowntree's
CHOCOLATES

1 Print out a suitable image. This is an easy project to bulk make, so why not do other signs at the same time.

2
Rowntree's
CHOCOLATES
MAKERS TO T.M. THE KING & QUEEN

2 Glue each image to medium-weight card, such as that found on the back of a notebook.



3 Use the inkpad to colour the cut white edges of the paper and the grey card.

4 Use several coats of spray varnish to achieve a tough, glossy finish.

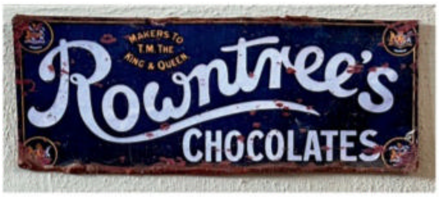
5 Using a craft knife, shave the edges of the sign in places to make them thinner and irregular, as if eaten away by rust.

6 Apply superglue gel to the 'rusted' areas and sprinkle with bicarbonate of soda, which will form uneven clumps.

7
ACRYLIC PAINT

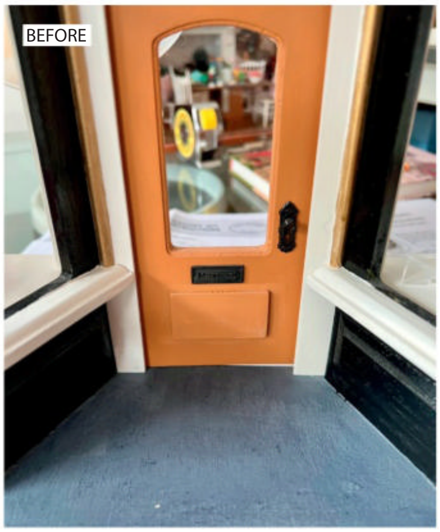
7 Paint the bicarb clumps a rusty brown colour to resemble lumpy, bumpy bubbling rust.

8 Dot a tiny amount of orange paint in places over the brown, for more realistic rust (as rust is rarely a uniform brown colour). Be careful not to overdo it though. Tiled entrance doorway



Tiled entrance doorway

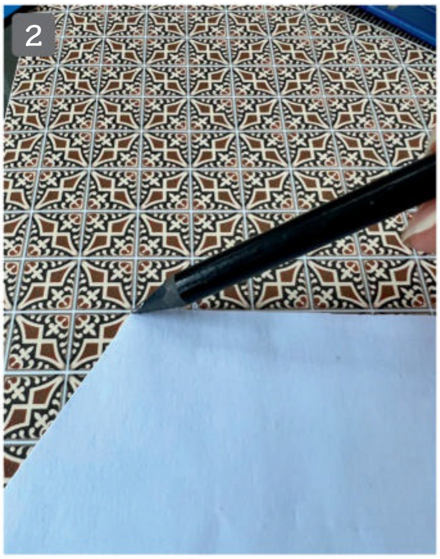
My Sid Cooke shop required a few additional features. I added a letterbox and door handle, and some raised wooden panels (which I painted black to match the shop front, but the entrance still didn't look right. I looked at some old shops in a nearby town and quite a few still have the old tiled entrance and brass strip in the doorway, so I found an easy way to retro-fit them to my shop.



YOU WILL NEED

Materials required
- Self-adhesive tiles
- Brass strip
- Glue

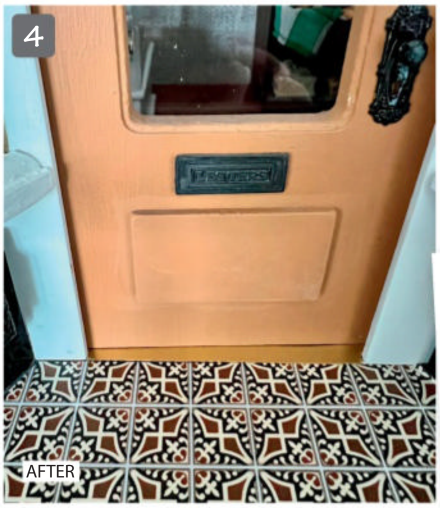
1 Make a template the size and shape of your doorway.



2 Draw round the template and cut the self-adhesive tile sheet to size.

3
#82 Strip
Brass 1/4
.016 x 6.35mm
Architecture
Design
Model
School
Projects
Hobby

3 Cut brass strip to the width of your door.



4 Peel back the backing on the tile sheet and press down into the doorway. Glue the brass strip in place.

Moi says...

"You can add more dimension to the tiled doorway by sticking the tile sheet to thin card and scoring the 'grout' lines using a blunt scribe to create a 3D effect, before gluing in place."

"A shop fascia is another important detail to get right. Buy wooden or plastic letters from a craft shop (find them in the scrapbooking aisle) and glue them to your shopfront. Carefully measure and plan before starting to glue, so that the spacing is equidistant. Think about the typeface and whether it is in keeping with the shop's era."

Inside your commercial premises

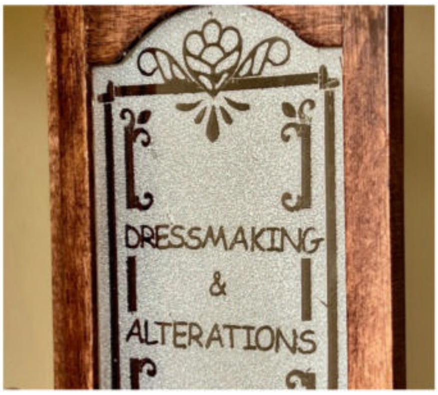
The perfect shop starts with the window display. Carefully select goods and display them attractively, using all the tricks employed by full-size window display artists. Stack cans and bottles, display jewellery on padded velvet rounds and stack colourful bales of fabric in a haberdashery store window.

Use appropriate shop fittings to kit out the interior too and make attractive countertop displays of goods. These can be purchased by makers such as Zena Coldfield and Michelle from Odin's Miniatures. Make sure you have masses of stock piled high and even hanging from the ceiling. A sparce shop is an unrealistic one! My antique shop is filled to overflowing, just like a real one!

Miniaturist Hazel Wyle added 'etched glass' doors in her shop, and I was keen to know how she achieved this. Self-adhesive letters and stickers were applied to acetate, which was then lightly sprayed with an airbrush and off-white paint. The stickers were then peeled off to reveal the etched effect. Genius! This would be great in a lawyer's office too and other commercial premises – perhaps the door of a private detective. I can see it working in a pub or bar as well, on windows and doors; saloon, lounge, brandies and whiskies...

As with a dolls house, when it comes to adding realistic detail to miniature commercial premises, turn to the full-size world, observe and copy. You won't go wrong!

Brite
FLORO


DRESSMAKING
&
ALTERATIONS

Missed the previous parts of this mini-series?

Head to our website to purchase the February, March, April, May and June issues and you'll have the complete set!

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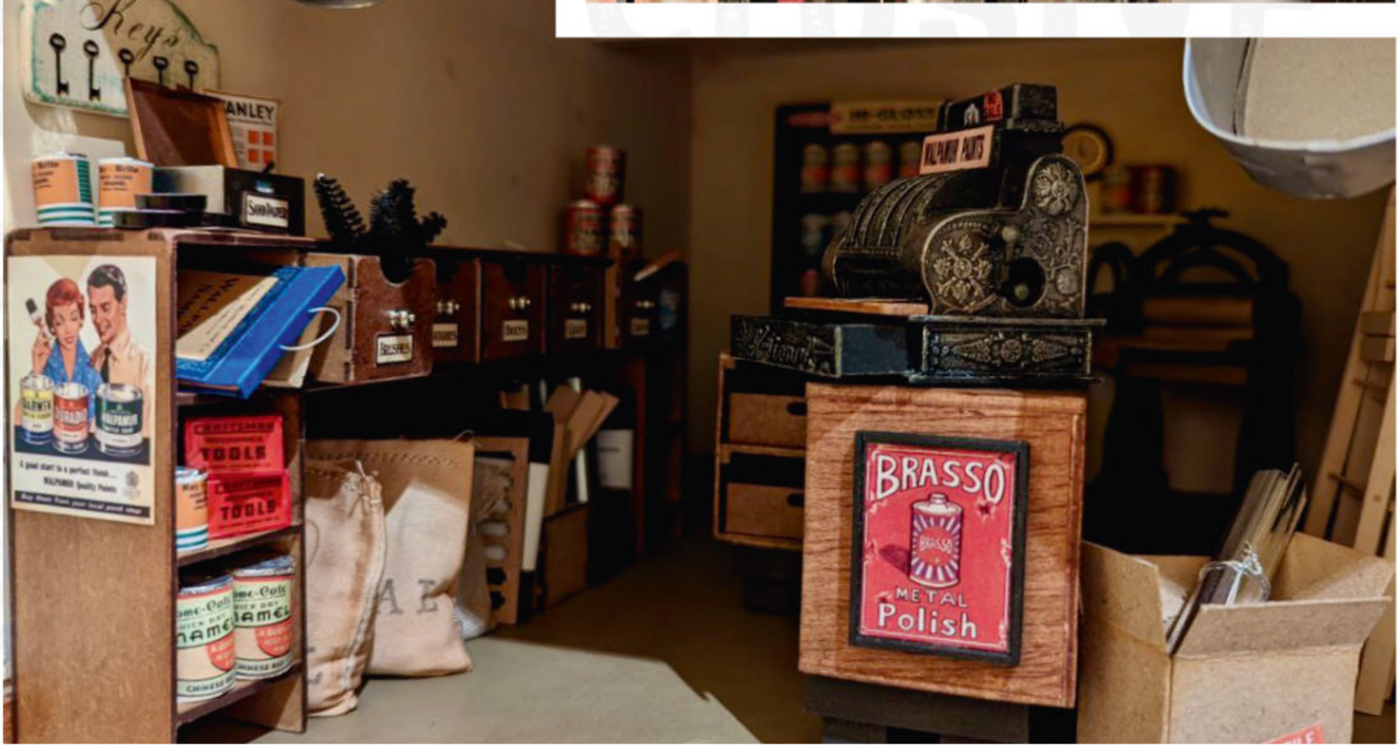
BOOT POLISH

MANAGER
&
ACCOUNTS

IRONMONGERS


Keys
TOOLS
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Natural talent

With a special delivery by first class beak, Alison Ratty introduces us to the fascinating world of 'Aunty Nature'.

Alison awaits the dragon's annual moult to collect scales for her gorgeous books

That lightbulb moment

It was 1879 when Thomas Edison invented the incandescent lightbulb, which would go on to revolutionise the way we live, but nature had been lighting the way considerably earlier. Celebrated for their bioluminescence, the firefly is one of our most extraordinary creatures, believed to have been around for in excess of 100 million years. Stood on a stack of handcrafted books which cleverly hide a small LED light, mixed media artisan and visual storyteller, Alison Ratty's beautiful firefly lantern perfectly captures that wonderfully evocative sense of history.

This tiny envelope has the ‘seal’ of approval

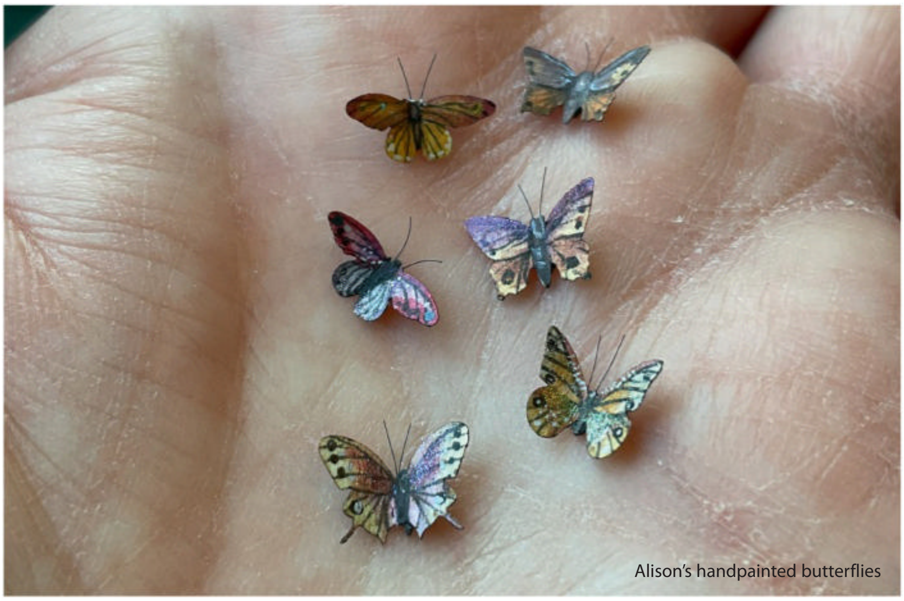
Balancing act

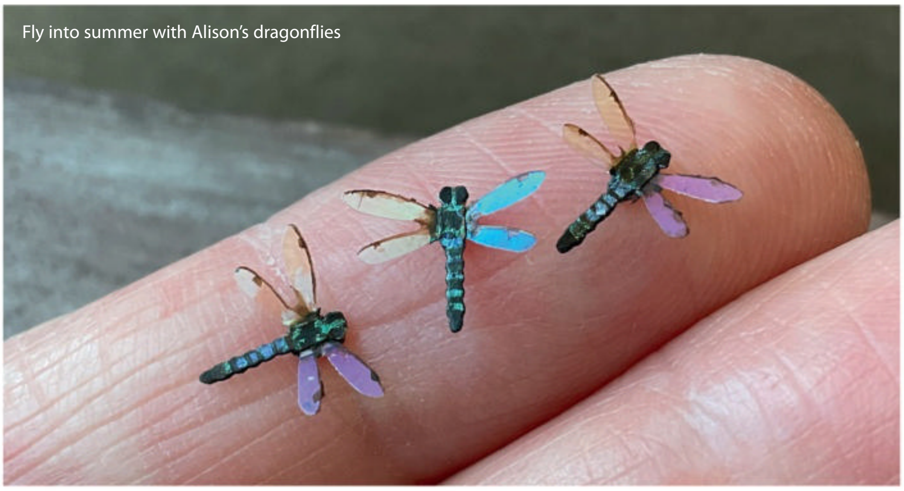
Influenced by a fascinating combination of nature and the ethereal, Alison’s miniatures are inspired by ‘Aunty Nature’, who she wonderfully describes as Mother Nature’s ‘slightly daft sister’. Entirely self-taught in the field of miniature art, Alison has a long history of artistic talent. Initially creating jewellery as a child, Alison continued honing these skills beyond her time at art college in Cambridge and whilst studying wildlife illustration. “I eventually fell out of love with jewellery and became more interested in fibre arts such as crochet and worked in a haberdashery shop for 14 years.” It was at this point that Alison’s life took an unexpected turn as nerve problems crept into the most important tools for any artist; her arms. After numerous operations, Alison endured almost a decade when creativity was forced to take a back seat. Something she understandably found incredibly challenging. “Once things started to heal, about four years ago, I began to try and make things again, and became frustrated again as it was clear my arms would never be quite right. So, I made a conscious decision to just make small, light things, and with the wonders of the internet discovered there was a whole magical world of people who loved tiny things!!!!” This was just prior to the lockdown of 2020 when like many others, Alison had been looking forward to attending Miniatura, which was, of course, cancelled due to the pandemic. “Your magazine and joining Rob Crouch’s Facebook group really opened the door to this new world. Being furloughed, but home, I couldn’t afford materials or tools, so began to look at what I had to hand, and realised my garden was full of wood that could be used!” remembers Alison. “It was interesting learning about which was best for different things. For example, privet has a tiny hole running through it, just the right fit for a piece of wire, so doesn’t need drilling. Acorn cups need cooking twice to allow for shrinkage and smell almost perfumed. How do you preserve moss? Which roots are strongest?” With time on her hands, Alison’s journey of discovery continued to evolve into the creative world now synonymous with her name, and three years later, almost two thousand ‘Aunty Nature’ inspired miniatures have found their way into collections throughout the world. “I now prefer making accessories, especially potion bottles, plants, mushrooms, clocks and handpainted books in particular. I’m currently experimenting with different kinds of polymer clays such as air-drying clays, and I have more types of glue than is really necessary. No material is off limits if it works.”

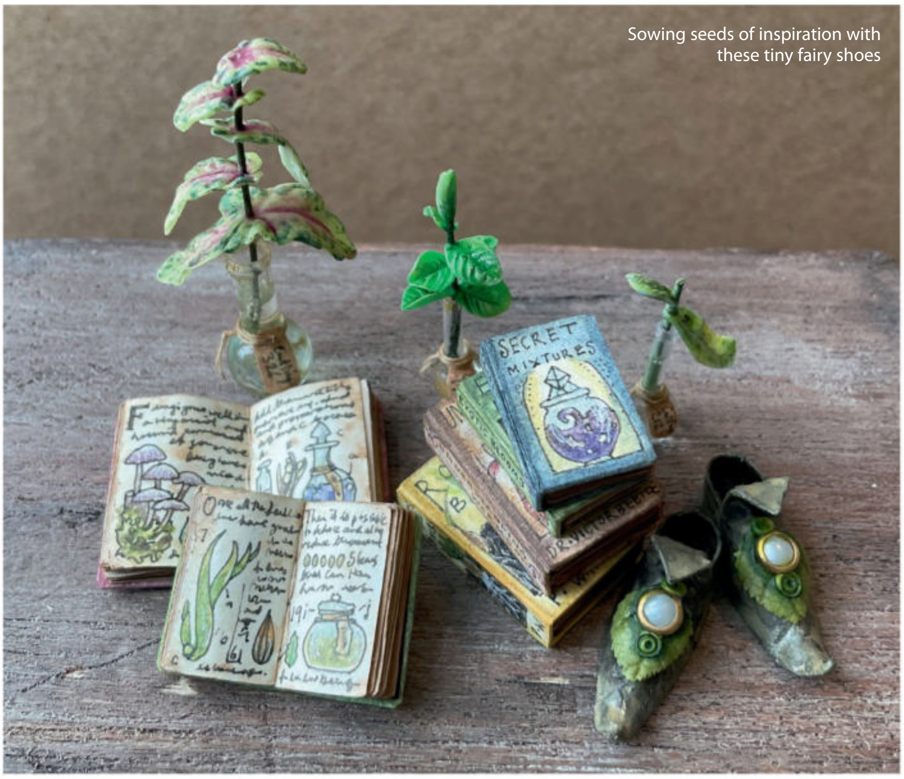
Creating character

Owl be seeing you

Crafted from polymer clay, Alison's owl postie delivers not only your mail, but a huge helping of personality! As sculpting the owls causes the pain in Alison's arms and neck to flare up, she is careful to limit how many owls she creates, making them something of an extra special limited edition. "It's a bit daft how they came about," she says, revealing it all began with some tiny pumpkins which cleverly interpreted the stalk as a tiny nose. "I showed a picture of them to my Halloween guru customer from Yorkshire. She said they looked less like pumpkins but more hawks, so I said perhaps I'll give up on pumpkins and make some owls. Ping! There's the idea. Add in another owl mad customer from Australia and you've got the Harry Potter owl post. So, I can't take too much credit really."


Alison's handpainted butterflies


Fly into summer with Alison's dragonflies


Sowing seeds of inspiration with these tiny fairy shoes

Two people who can definitely take some of the credit are Alison's grandparents, who clearly instilled that fluid imagination at an early age. "My Nan and Grandad had fairies living in their house. Really, they did, as my Nan used to tell me and my sister they had left presents at the top of the spiral staircase. And they had! My Nan would spot them constantly, telling me one had just hidden behind a table leg. I spent hours and hours searching for these fairies. I never did find one, but not for want of trying. I also come from a family where butterflies and bugs are exciting, so is mud, moss and anything green."

Contemporary landscaping is an increasingly popular area of small scale, but it's always those tiny, almost unexpected details which bring any garden scene to life. It's the leaves scattered on the ground in a burst of autumn colour, and the icicles creating a winter chill. Or, finding that 1/12th scale butterfly, measuring mere millimetres, it's wings almost iridescent as it basks in the impression of a glorious summer's day. Although Alison describes her butterfly designs as fantasy, they are, in fact, based on the real thing and are hand painted with extraordinary accuracy using pen and watercolour paint. "It's a bit fiddly. Don't sneeze," she cautions. "But the hardest bit is not making the colours too drab, sludge is my favourite colour. I am addicted to handmade metallic watercolours, so added hints of those too." The sense of realism is heightened by the extra handpainted detail on the butterflies' underwings, meaning that, seen from any angle, they really do resemble the real thing. As do Alison's dragonflies, which demonstrate an equally incredible attention to detail, their wings both posable and transparent.

Discover the world of beetles

SECRET MIXTU
BEETLES AS PETS

Alison's firefly lantern

Modest as ever, Alison is quick to point out that her customers share that fantastic flair for imagination, citing fabulous ideas including trolls and an alchemist's greenhouse. "I probably drive them a bit daft as I'm a flibbertigibbet, flitting from one thing to another. One day it's books, then mushrooms, lamps, plants. Truth is, I make what I feel my arms can cope with that day as painting is easier than clay work. I love clay but need the constant change to avoid repetitive strain. I've still got loads and loads of ideas, so plenty more in the tank providing I look after my arms." Continually finding herself having to navigate the duel

'Twisty plant cuttings'

Capturing the imagination with this Violet demissa plant

> "Don't give up. If you can't do something, focus on what you can do"

Everyone needs a sludge filter!

Did you Know?

Dragonflies are some of our oldest winged creatures, pre-dating the firefly by around 200 million years.

needs of her health and creativity, Alison talks with delight of her excitement at finding what she describes as her dream job, disclosing how grateful she is to have joined the growing ranks of small-scale artisans. She also shares some advice for those who may find themselves in a similar situation. "Don't give up. If you can't do something, focus on what you can do," she says. "And do that thing to the best of your abilities." The old adage where there's a will there's a way definitely applies here. Where there's a miniaturist, there will always be a way!

INFO

For more information visit:

http://www.etsy.com/shop/alisonratty

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Joanne Garwell, Editor

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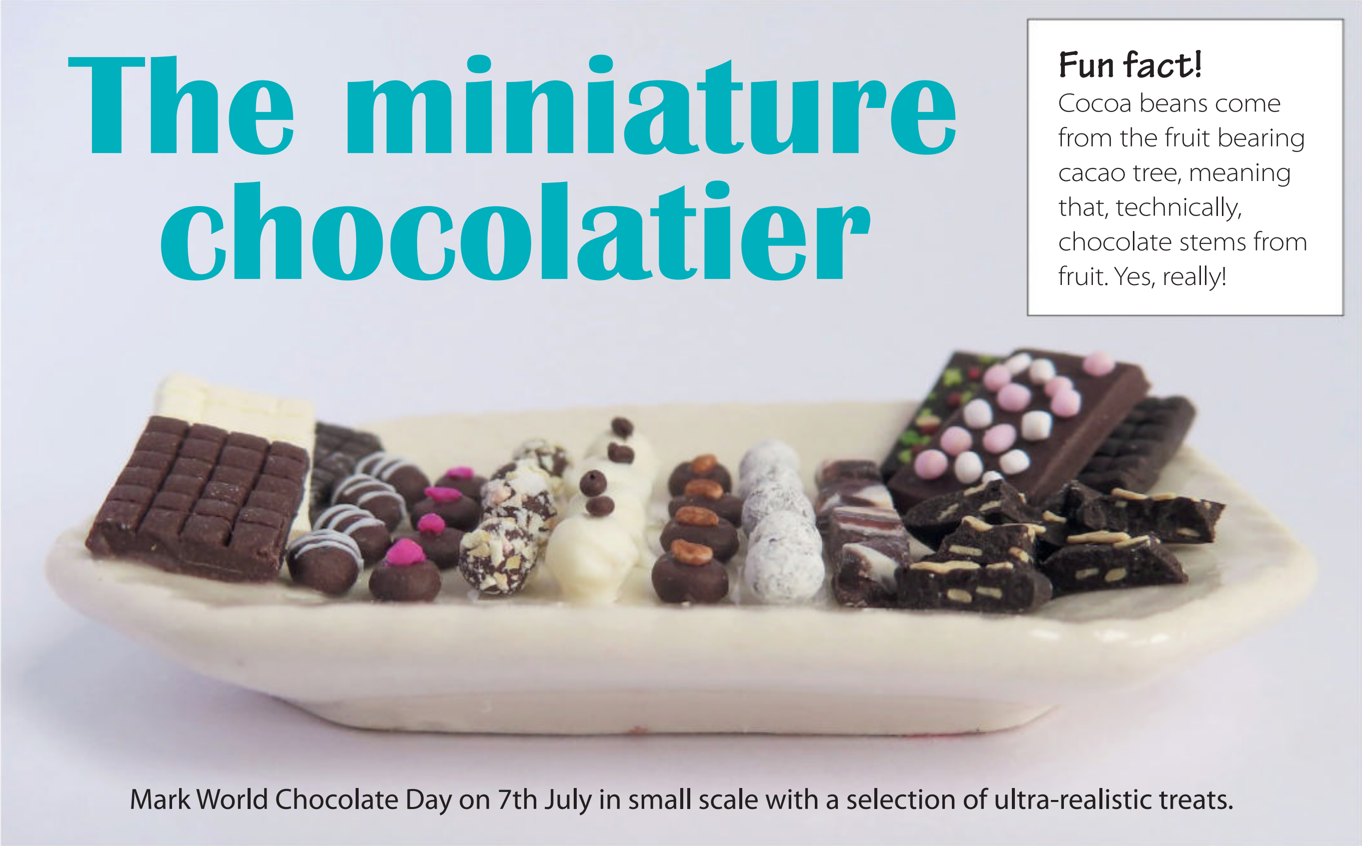
The miniature chocolatier

Fun fact!
Cocoa beans come from the fruit bearing cacao tree, meaning that, technically, chocolate stems from fruit. Yes, really!



Mark World Chocolate Day on 7th July in small scale with a selection of ultra-realistic treats.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Chocolate, white, sunflower yellow, fuchsia pink, pastel pink, red, purple and spring green polymer clays
- White, black, brown, dark cadmium orange and golden ochre pastels
- Sculpey Bake & Bond
- Craft glue
- 1/12th scale cream or white ceramic platter

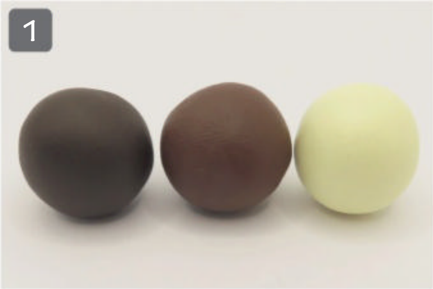
Tools required

- Small paintbrushes
- Roller
- Needle tool or sewing pin
- Old butter knife
- Craft knife

Team Top Pick!

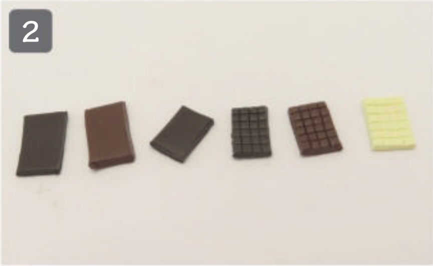
"So many ideas packed into one project! I love how you could take one chocolate design and add it to a mini cake or make the whole lot!"
Lucie

1



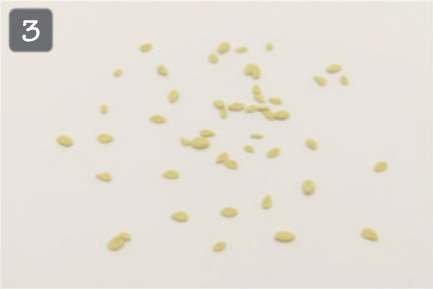
1 Take some brown polymer clay and mix with grated black pastel to mix a shade resembling dark chocolate. Next, mix white polymer clay with sunflower yellow to make white chocolate. You'll also need a similar amount of the brown clay.

2



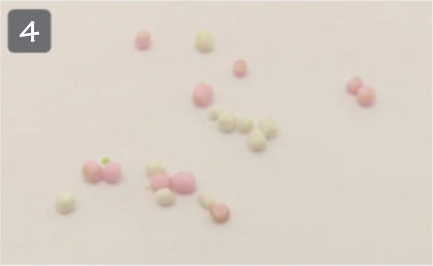
2 Roll the three colours out to 2mm in thickness. Use a craft knife to cut out two dark chocolate bars, two milk and one white. Carefully score individual pieces of chocolate into two of the dark bars, one milk and one white.

3

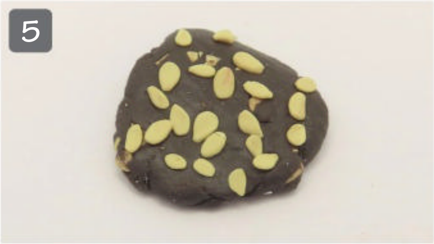


3 Mix a small amount of the white chocolate mixture with a little golden ochre, dark cadmium orange and brown pastel to create an almond shade. Roll lots of very tiny carrots, rounded at each end and flatten with a fingernail to form that familiar almond shape.

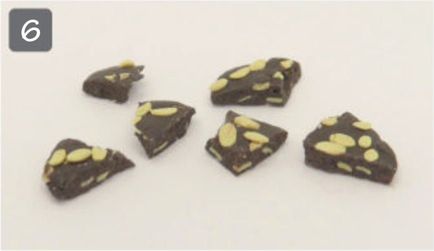
4



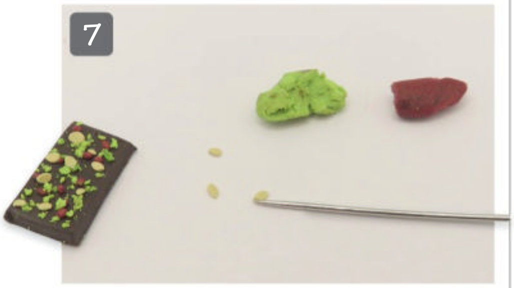
4 Roll some balls of both white and pastel pink clay, just over 1mm in diameter, into small tubes. Create flat ends and the look of tiny marshmallows by pressing them between your fingernail and worksurface. Bake these and the almonds and allow to cool.



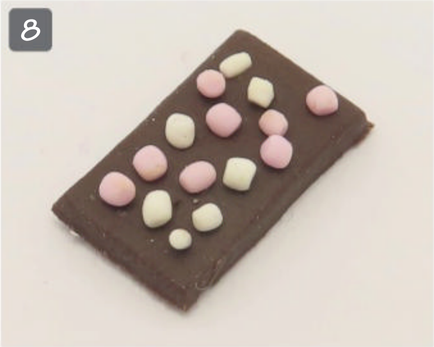
5 To make almond bark, add some of the almonds to a small piece of dark chocolate clay, ensuring they're well mixed. Flatten the clay rather than rolling it to ensure a slightly uneven surface. Add some more almonds to the top before baking.



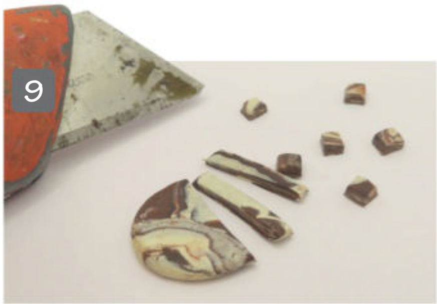
6 Once cooled, break the clay into individual pieces of bark, revealing the almonds inside.



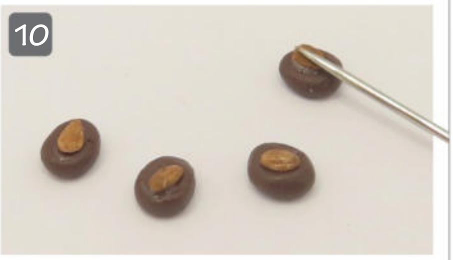
7 Add some more of the almonds to one of the plain dark chocolate bars. Mix red clay with fuchsia pink and purple, shaping into individual cranberries. Sprinkle these and some small flecks of spring green clay, resembling pieces of pistachio, inbetween the almonds.



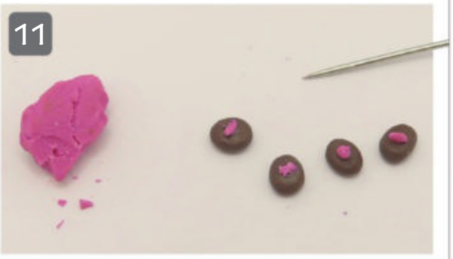
8 Add the baked marshmallows to the plain milk chocolate bar, pressing them lightly into the clay.



9 Mix equal parts dark, milk and white chocolate clay, creating a marble effect. Roll the mixture out to 2mm in thickness. Place in the freezer and allow to harden up a little before cutting into squares.

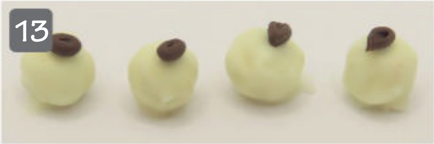


10 Mould four 3mm balls of milk chocolate clay into small, flat ovals. Roll four pieces of the cream clay into the shape of whole almonds, brushing liberally with a dark cadmium orange and brown pastel mix. Use a needle tool or sewing pin to lightly score lines lengthways down each nut before adhering to the top of the chocolates with Sculpey Bake & Bond or similar.

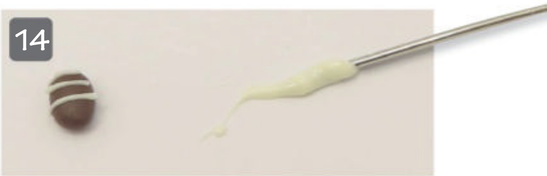


11 Make four additional flat ovals, this time using dark chocolate clay. Flake four tiny pieces of fuchsia pink clay, adding one to the top of each oval to replicate rose creams.

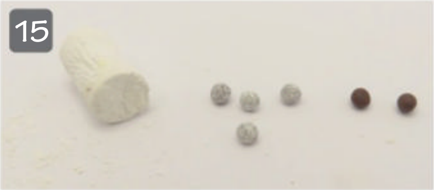
12 Using an old butter knife, mix Bake & Bond with the white chocolate clay to create a mixture with the consistency of melted chocolate. Roll four balls of the same clay in the mixture to create four realistic truffles.



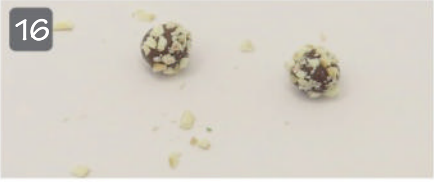
13 Shape four tiny balls of dark chocolate clay into faux coffee beans. Use a needle tool or sewing pin to score a small indentation in the centre of each bean before placing on top of the white truffles.



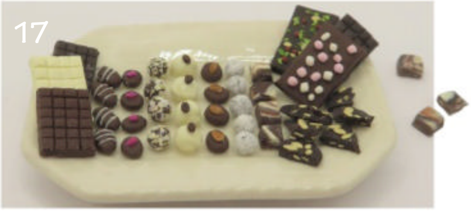
14 Mould four ovals, this time not flat, and with the needle tool or sewing pin, decorate each one with three stripes using the 'melted' white chocolate mixture.



15 Roll six 3mm balls of the milk chocolate clay in grated white pastel, creating simple but very effective champagne truffles.



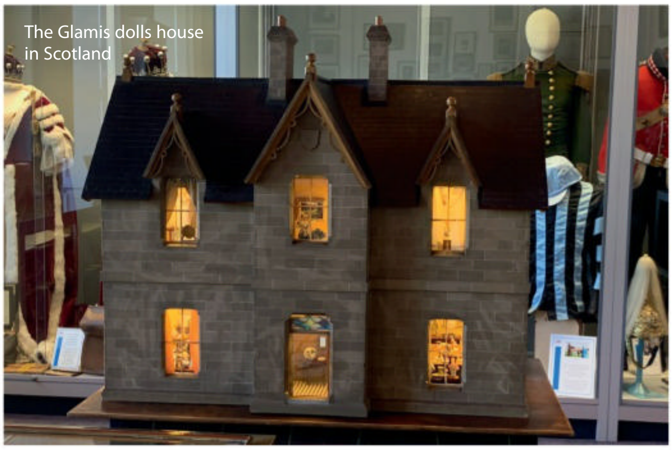
16 Roll out some thin cream clay and brush with mixed golden ochre, dark cadmium orange and brown pastel. Bake alongside all the other chocolates. Once cooled, cut the clay into minute pieces, rolling four 3mm balls of milk chocolate clay in the 'chopped nuts'. Return to the oven to bake.

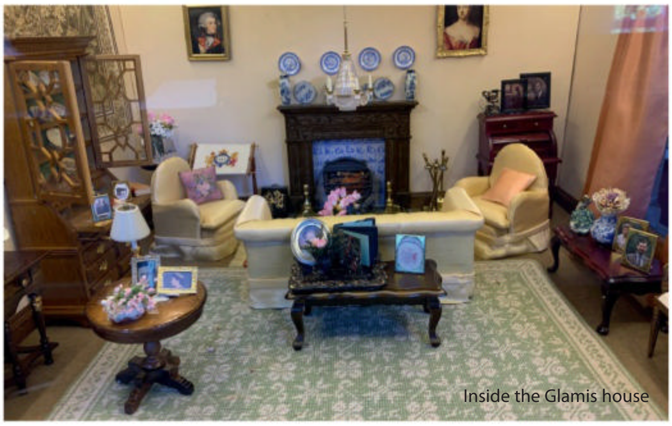


17 Take a 1/12th scale ceramic platter, preferably white or cream to allow the chocolates to really pop, and carefully glue each one to the plate.

Special *staycation*

In this two-parter, Moi Ali picks some of the UK's miniature highlights to enjoy if you're staycationing in the UK this summer, starting with Scotland and the north of England.

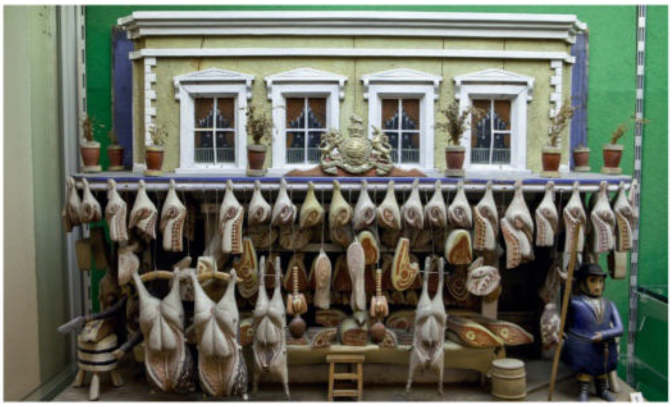

The Glamis dolls house in Scotland

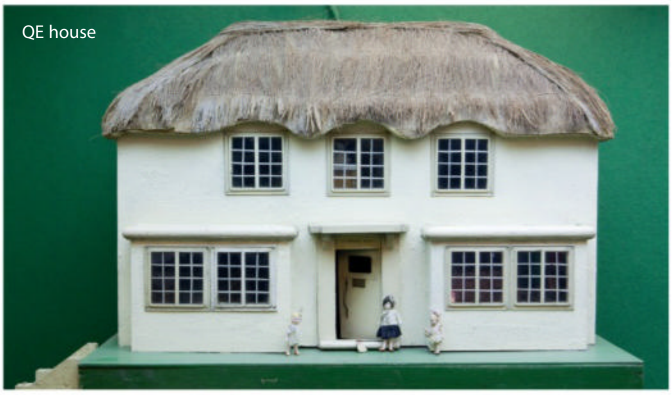

Inside the Glamis house

If you're not travelling abroad this summer, or maybe you're visiting from overseas, there's plenty to do here in the UK when it comes to the miniatures world. Why not use some of your annual leave or family time enjoying the finest miniatures in the land and bringing some inspiration (and a few little treasures) back home with you. In this first article I look at Scotland and the north of England and next month it's the turn of the south of England and Wales.

Starting in the north of Scotland, a trip to the spectacular Glamis Castle is a must. Here, at the childhood home of the late Queen Mother, is a humble and little-known but nonetheless charming dolls house. The Victorian double-fronted villa, built in 1868, was found in an attic in the private side of Glamis by Lady Strathmore, soon after her husband Fergus inherited the Castle. Lady Strathmore's daughter played with the house, and when she outgrew it, it was put on display in the public side.

Glamis Castle
Angus
DD8 1RJ

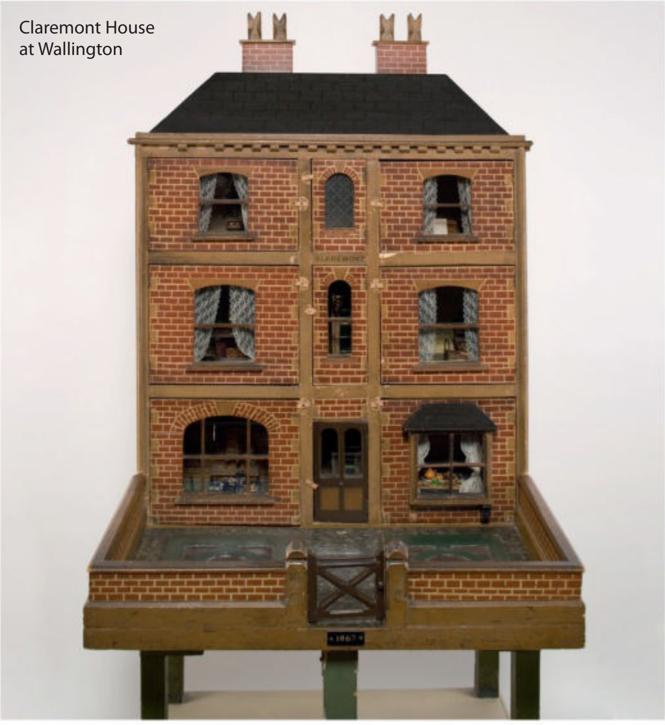



QE house

Moving south to Edinburgh, call in at the wonderful Museum of Childhood in the city's historic Royal Mile. Admission to the five floors of childhood memorabilia is free of charge, and you can feast your eyes on antique dolls, dolls houses and miniature shops galore. With over 50,000 objects in the collection, you'll be drawn to the miniature English butcher's shop dating from the 1880s, with a royal warrant over the door and joints of beef, pork and lamb – not to mention whole carcasses hanging from meat hooks!

The collection also contains (amongst many other miniatures) a couple of English open-fronted grocers' shops dating from the 19th century, a quaint miniature milliner's kiosk from Peru, a tiny Nuremburg kitchen, and a Triang Princess Elizabeth's House, a Tudor-style thatched house modelled on Y Bwythn Bach, a Wendy house built and furnished by Welsh craftsmen and presented to the late Queen (then Princess Elizabeth) on her sixth birthday in 1932.

Museum of Childhood
42 High Street,
Edinburgh
EH1 1TG



Claremont House at Wallington

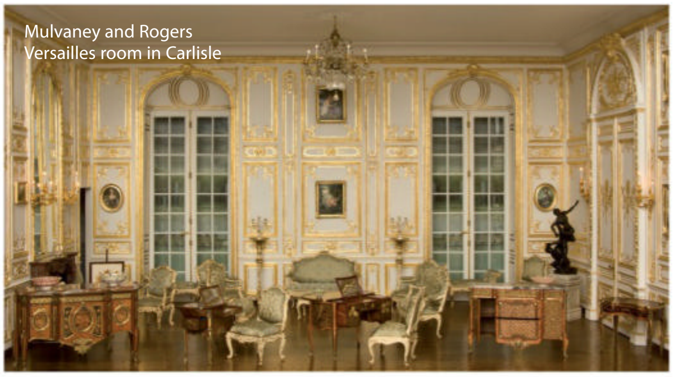
Inside the Hammond House at Wallington

The Doll's House at Wallington

Continue south, over the border into England, and you will find the National Trust's Wallington, a stately home in Northumberland. It contains a whole room dedicated to 18 different dolls houses. Dating to 1886, the nine-foot-long Hammond House is the highlight, its 36 fully-furnished rooms containing 1,500 items. It came from Hull and belonged to the family that owned Hammond's department store in that city.

The collection contains many more antique dolls houses. The Long House, dating to 1870, is still in original condition externally. The Joiner's House (1835-1840) is the oldest in the collection, and has gothic panels in the front door and gothic window above. Red Gables (1886) has an even fancier gothic doorway! Some of the houses have a great pedigree, such as the White House, built around 1880 for Alfred, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and his wife, the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, for their children. Built in 1867, the brick-fronted Claremont comprises six fully-furnished rooms and, unusually, a walled front garden.

Wallington
Cambo
Near Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 4AR



Mulvaney and Rogers Versailles room in Carlisle

One of the room boxes at Carlisle

A little further south is A World in Miniature, at Houghton near Carlisle. With over 50 different room boxes on display, it is definitely worth a visit – but check before you go, as I've heard rumours that it is moving to a new home soon. Situated within a garden centre, this little museum has plenty to satisfy the miniature connoisseur, including two museum-quality rooms created by the internationally renowned model-makers, Mulvaney and Rogers. Their French room is modelled on one of the rooms at the Palace of Versailles, and the Mulvaney and Rogers Grand Dining Room is another miniature masterpiece.

Amongst the more unusual miniatures is a theatre with fine plaster ceilings and carved detailing on the balconies, which took eight years to build. You will also find two Charles Rennie Mackintosh rooms, a bedroom and a dining room. The handcrafted mini-Mackintosh furniture includes a white bedroom suite modelled on the one at Mackintosh's Hill House near Glasgow and a black dining room suite with typical Mackintosh high-backed chairs. My favourite is the Arts and Crafts living room, with exquisite furniture in the Liberty style.

A World in Miniature
Houghton Hall Garden Centre
Carlisle
Cumbria
CA6 4JB

Judges Lodgings Lancaster.

Keep heading south to the attractive city of Lancaster, and Judges' Lodgings Museum, located within the city's oldest town house. The top floor houses the Museum of Childhood, and the collection of toys includes vintage and antique dolls houses. The 1/12th scale model of the Judges' Lodgings is a treat, and there are some delightful Victorian dolls houses, as well as more contemporary models from the 1950s and 1960s.

Judges' Lodgings Museum
Church Street
Lancaster
LA1 1YS

Pre-loved houses galore
in Morcambe

Drive a bit further south to the seaside town of Morecambe, for some retail therapy at Miniature Real Estate. You will find much to tempt you, but be sure to leave enough money for a bag of chips and some ice cream on the prom afterwards! The shop opened in 2018 and can be found in a fabulous big Victorian house. Shelves are filled with both affordable and expensive treasures to suit all pockets and tastes. I particularly like that owner Rebecca Helliwell stocks pre-loved items as well as new. She also does an interesting side line in smaller scenes for people who have no space for a large dolls house, using lanterns, bread bins, first aid boxes, cabinets... anything and everything that can take a little diorama.

Miniature Real Estate
112 Thornton Road
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA4 5PJ

EXCLUSIVE GIVEAWAY!

Enter our exclusive staycation competition to win the following bundle:

A family ticket to see the Nostell dolls house for yourself – and get a FREE book on the dolls house as part of the prize – PLUS a pair of free tickets to visit nearby Newby Hall to see the amazing collection of dolls houses.

To enter, simply visit www.dollshouseandminiaturescene.co.uk and click on giveaways!

Competition closes 31st July 2023. Good luck!

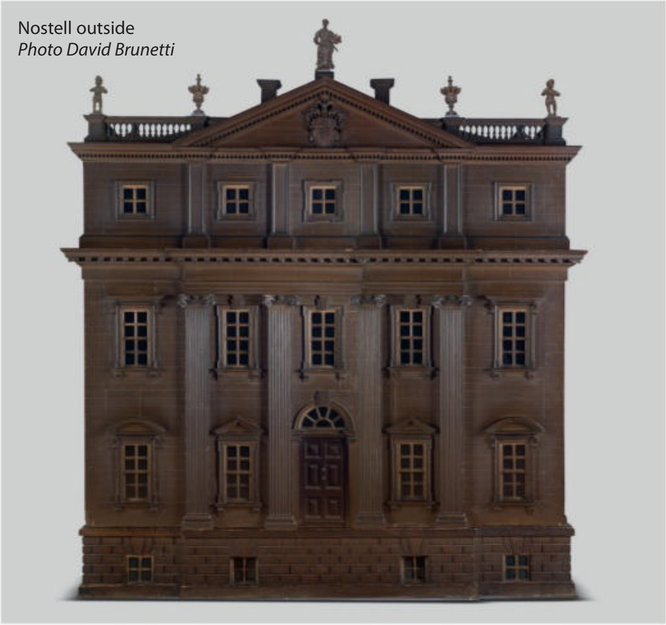
For more information regarding competitions visit www.warnersgroup.co.uk/competition-terms/

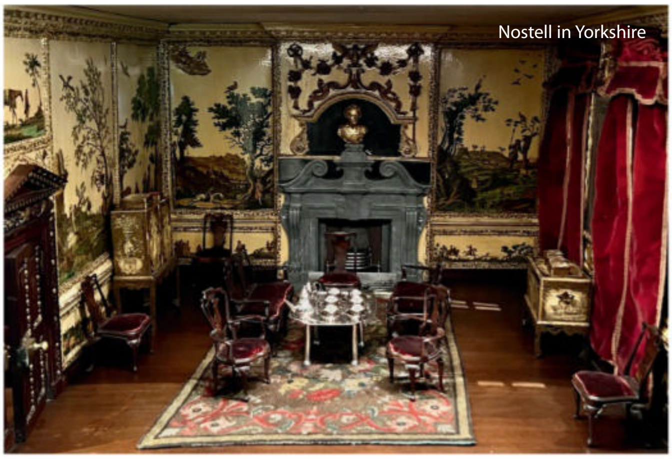
A Newby treasure
Photo Barry Hippisley

See this at Newby
Photo Barry Hippisley

Now for Lancashire's arch rival, Yorkshire! I have to confess that the vast collection at Newby Hall is the only place in this feature that I have not personally visited, but it comes highly recommended and is on my own bucket list. It is one of the most important private collections on display anywhere in the world, comprising nearly 70 dolls houses and room boxes collected over four decades by two prominent proponents of this wonderful hobby, Caroline Hamilton (of Kensington Dollhouse Festival fame) and Jane Fiddick.

Newby Hall
Ripon,
North Yorkshire,
HG4 5AE


Nostell outside
Photo David Brunetti


Nostell in Yorkshire

Last but not least is magnificent dolls house at Nostell, a National Trust property. Created three centuries ago, it was commissioned around 1735, the same time the house was being built, and was furnished by the wife of the fourth baronet. It is believed to be the best example of its kind – and it is certainly one of the finest historic dolls houses I have ever seen. Nine elegant rooms arranged across three storeys contain beautiful furniture from the era, including hallmarked silver and working locks, set against a backdrop of stunning hand-painted period wallpaper.

Moi says...

"Next month you can read my review of the Nostell dolls house book – and there's a further opportunity to win a copy and a family ticket to see the attraction!"

Nostell
Doncaster Road
Nostell
Near Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF4 1QE

Next month...

Moi will be sharing some miniature gems from the rest of England and Wales.

FEATURE *by Bea Broadwood*

At Home with THE BROADWOODS

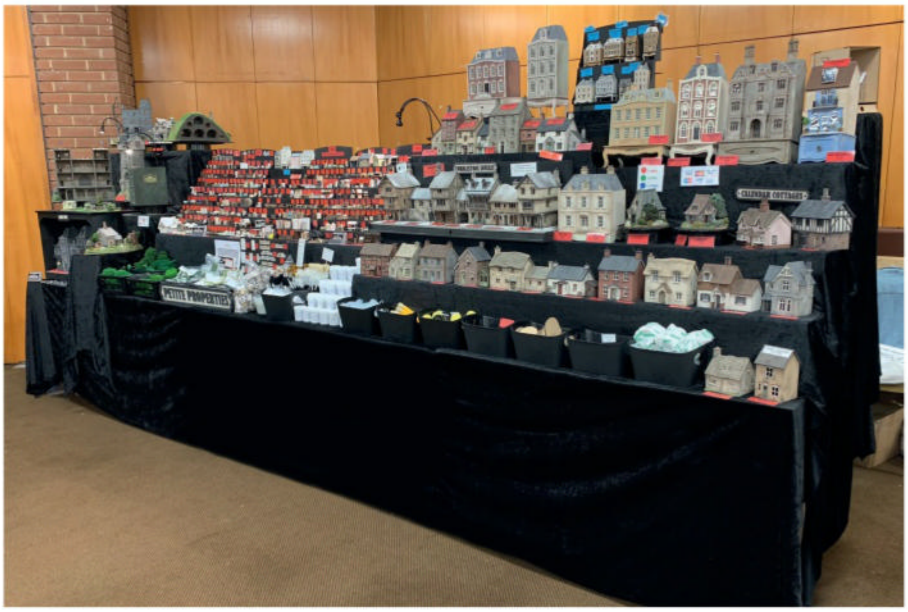
LONDON CALLING...

2023 marks Petite Properties' 20th year in the world of miniatures and reaching this nostalgic milestone has put the PP team in a very retrospective mood. So this month, they share their memories of the ever popular Kensington Dolls House Festival and celebrate their favourite smaller scale miniatures from this year's summer show!

Kensington Dolls House Festival was founded back in 1985 and the current organiser, Charlotte Stokoe, took over the reins in 2005. Held in Kensington Town Hall, there are two shows each year; a summer festival in May and a Christmas show in December. Back in the mid noughties, we were invited to attend our very first Kensington Dolls House Festival and I can still clearly recall our debut show, as I was racked with nerves. We began with a stand filled solely with 'one off' handmade 1/24th dolls houses. I don't mind admitting, that being surrounded by high end artisans and well-known bespoke makers, was initially very intimidating and I felt very out of place! But I shouldn't have worried; fellow exhibitors and visitors were not only warm and welcoming, but also incredibly excited to see the PP stand at the show too.

Over the years, the Kensington Festival has evolved and changed. The original three-day summer event was reduced to a more manageable two days and a festive one day Christmas show was also added to their annual schedule. Inevitably, as time has passed, much loved artisans have retired, but new enthusiastic and talented makers have also emerged and joined the ranks of KDF exhibitors. However, throughout the years the layout of the show has remained a constant; three floors of top exhibitors and artisans; all offering the very best miniatures from all around the world.

▼The PP stand at the Kensington Dolls House Festival, 2023



Evolution and organisation!

Going over old photos, it seems that the PP stand has also evolved considerably with time. Our half scale display which started on a modest six-foot table, has now grown and morphed into a 15-foot showcase of 1/48th and 1/144th dolls houses, street scenes, magical dioramas and accessories. Space behind the PP stand is always at a premium at this top show, so we have to be pretty ruthless and lean when it comes to packing. But with years of practice, we have become a relatively well-oiled machine. However, no matter how many 'check lists' we create... something is always left behind!

▲Minion Mo packing for the May show

Uniquely, the Kensington summer festival is a Friday/Saturday event. So for many exhibitors the show actually begins on the Thursday evening, when access to the town hall is available for set up. Negotiating London traffic on the way in (and out) can be a tad stressful... and being totally honest there are some parts of our biannual pilgrimage into the capital where Mo and I simply close our eyes! Luckily, Mr Bea is used to London driving (he used to work in London many moons ago) and so he is unflinching in the PP van as he navigates the capital's super busy roads.

Everybody needs good neighbours!

For many years now, the PP stand has been side by side in the foyer with the incredibly talented ladies of Shepherd's Miniatures; Chris and Hannah. It may not be apparent to visitors, but if you are working 'behind' a table, the Kensington show can be quite an intense event. We feel particularly lucky to have such lovely neighbours and our section of the foyer is constantly filled with much banter and laughter too. So much so, it's a wonder that we get any work done at all!

Shepherd Miniatures
HAND MADE SCALE MODELS
shepherdminiatures.com

▲ Chris and Hannah of Shepherd's Miniatures, thank you for all your help and for keeping us laughing!

▲ Mr Bea was spoilt again by his Chelmsford ladies!

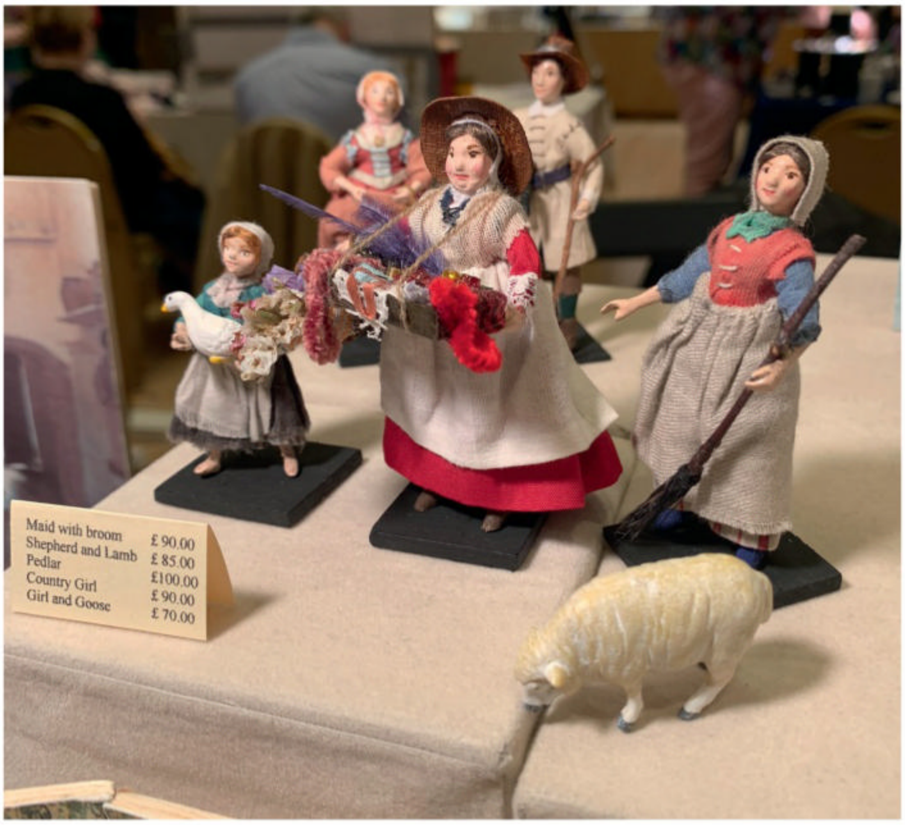
However, it is not just the people behind the stands that help make the show what it is. For us, the visitors are pretty fantastic too! KDF is the southernmost show we attend and it is where we meet up with many of our wonderful regulars! Each time we attend our lovely 'Chelmsford ladies' (whom Mr Bea cheekily calls 'his lovely Essex girls') always spoil us rotten and the last show in May was certainly no exception.

> It is not just the people behind the stands that help make the show what it is. For us, the visitors are pretty fantastic too!
>
> *Bea*

Morning walkabout

As a team, we always try and have a brisk walk around the show on Saturday morning, as normally this is the only opportunity we get to feel like a visitor and take in all the beautiful stands and displays. Over the years, we have seen more and more smaller scale miniatures steadily appearing at the show and back in May, I personally was inspired by the stunning quarter scale dolls made by Kate Pinsent. I have known Kate for many, many years and like her talented mother before her, she creates wonderfully detailed, characterful dolls in 1/12th, 1/24th and even 1/48th! From tiny soldiers, to humble monks; Kate is sure to have the perfect inhabitant for any miniature dwelling, in any scale!

On our morning wander around the town hall, The Miniature Garden's display also caught my eye with a beautiful and inspiring 1/48th garden scene. Wrapping around one of our little potting sheds, Georgie had created a beautiful walled garden diorama which was filled with so much detail. Proving that her beautiful range of detailed plant and flower kits certainly make the ideal finishing touches for any smaller scale garden setting.



◀ 1/24th scale dolls by Kate Pinsent

Last, but certainly not least, I must mention Masters Miniatures, as I was blown away by their stunning half scale furniture; which literally stopped us in our tracks as we passed by their stand. Like their 1/12th counterparts, their 1/24th pieces are eye wateringly detailed and exquisitely made. I particularly loved their delicate Hepplewhite Suite, as it was a breath-taking example of perfection in this highly popular smaller scale.

Best laid plans...

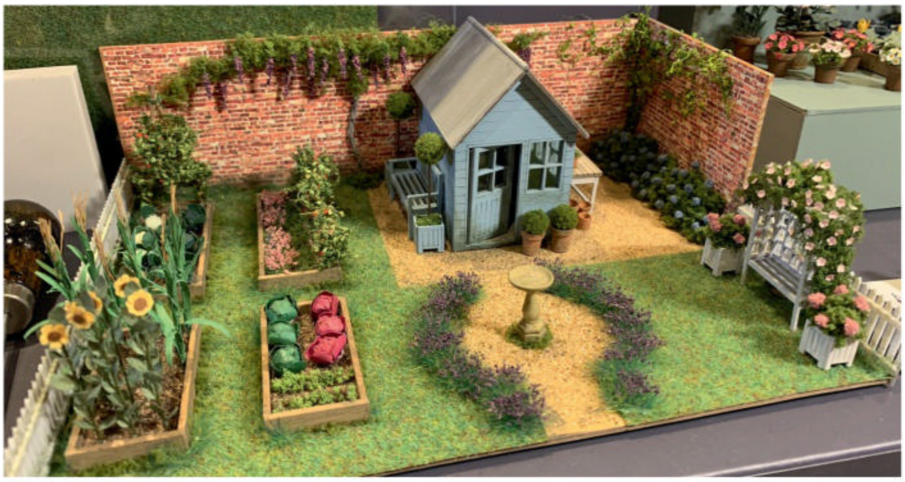
Unfortunately, in the past visitors travelling to Kensington via train have been disrupted by track maintenance or line repair and this year the scheduled rail strikes did sadly impact the attendance. This was of course beyond everyone's control and in turn it was a real shame for visitors, the organisers and exhibitors alike. Despite everything it was still a memorable and fun-filled event, which was enjoyed by so many.

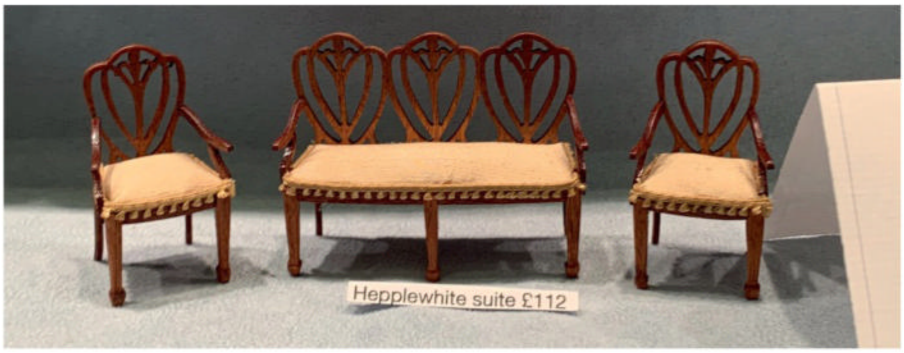
As with all good things, the 2023 festival seemed to pass by in a blur and inevitably came to an end. However, when you are used to rural village life, three days in central London can feel like quite a shock to the system and no matter how much fun was had, we are always somewhat relieved to get home!

Now with the summer festival done and dusted for another year and despite the height of summer being upon us, here in PPHQ we are already looking ahead to the Christmas Kensington Festival and making big plans for it.

So, if you are heading to London this December, just follow the laughter and you can find us in the foyer, next to those lovely ladies from Shepherd's Miniatures. We look forward to seeing you there!

▼ A quarter scale garden scene by Georgie Steeds





▲ 1/24th Hepplewhite Suite by Masters Miniatures

"I was also one of the many who couldn't make the show due to the train strike – fingers crossed for the next one!"
Joanne, Editor

▼ December Cottage... Christmas plans in July!

INFO

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If you have enjoyed reading this great magazine, or indeed any of the ones shown above, it would be great if you could leave us a review. We all like to know when something is good and when we've done a good job! Thanks 😊

Tropical Plants

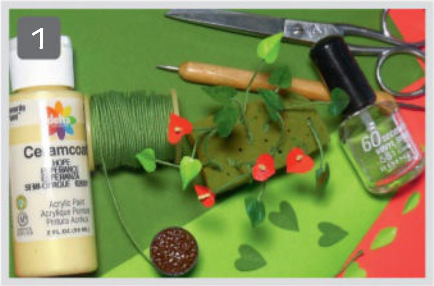
Tropical plants are everywhere right now, a popular trend in home decor and great for having around for health and wellbeing benfits. Making these tropical plants demonstrates the beauty of nature whilst also brightening your miniature scene whether indoors or out! We're showing you no less than nine different varieties to make using simple craft materials!

Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel

YOU WILL NEED

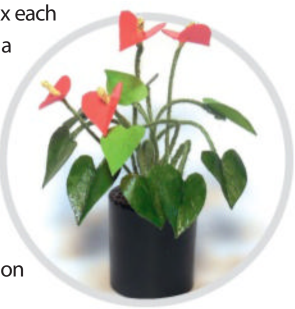
Materials required
- White, red and shades of green paper
- Various green florist tape
- White paper tape
- Green, fuchsia/purple and red Sharpie pens
- Light green, leaf green, yellow, orange and red acrylic paints
- Covered florist wire
- Brown polymer clay
- Small styrofoam ball
- Green scatter (model railway source)
- Selection of colouring pencils
- Varnish & white glue
- Small bottle tops or miniature pots

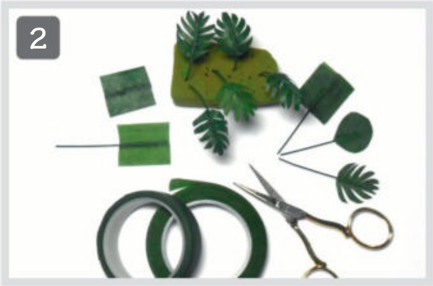
Tools required
- Small sharp scissors
- Wire cutters
- Small five-petal flower paper punch
- Fine paintbrush



ANTHURIUM

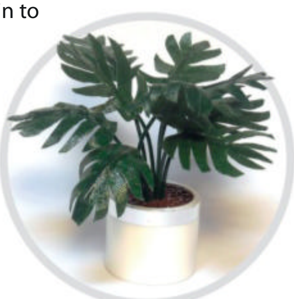
Cut several green leaves and coloured flowers from paper using the templates provided. Cut a florist wire stem for each leaf and flower. Emboss the veins using a needle tool and slightly cupping them. Fix each leaf to the top of a wire stem. Paint the remaining wire tips yellow. Pierce the flower and fix at the bottom of the painted portion of these stems.

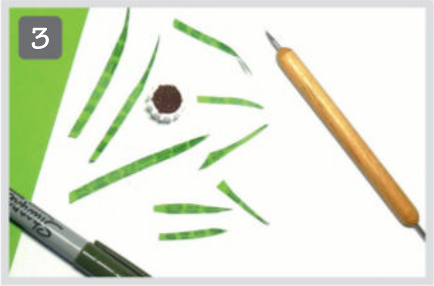




SPLIT-LEAF PHILODENDRON

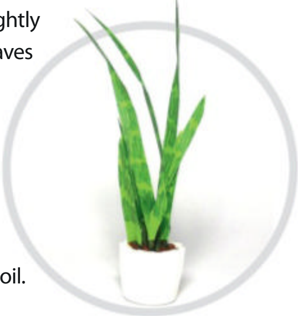
These big, rounded, glossy leaves develop arced side slits as they mature. Sandwich a piece of florist wire between florist tape stuck back to back. Cut the basic rounded shape first. Then begin to cut arced slits along both sides of the leaf. Curl the leaf slightly downwards.

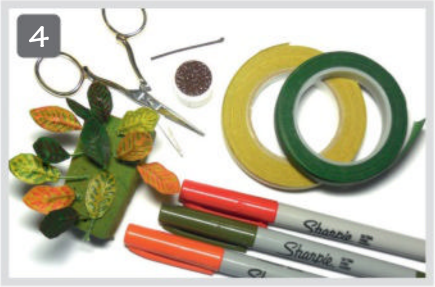




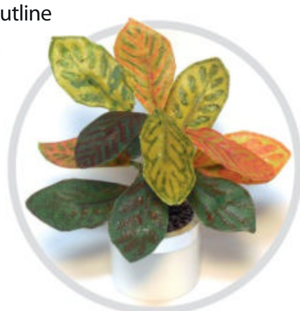
SNAKE PLANT

This plant is also known as 'mother-in-law's tongue'! Vertically scribble dark green bands across lighter green paper. Cut several shard-like leaves of varying lengths. Emboss a central vein. Lightly twist longer leaves nearer the tip. Fix a short piece of florist wire to the lower part of each leaf to embed in the soil.

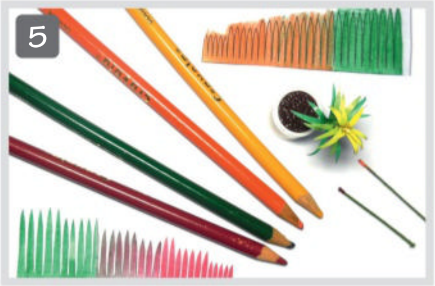




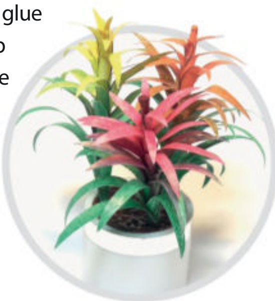
CROTON



These colourful leaves, with their yellow and red veins are pointed ovals, broader near the tip than near the stem. Cut each leaf shape from medium or light green tape and wire sandwiches. Outline and vein them with yellow or red Sharpie marker. Fix the stems onto a central wire stalk.



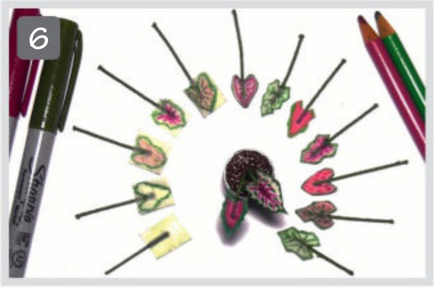
BROMELIADS



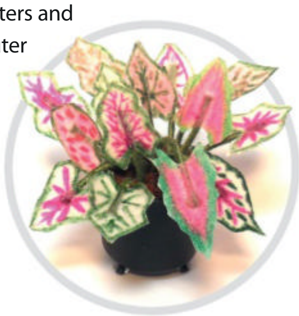
Copy the bromeliad pattern onto white paper. Shade the short end on both sides bright yellow, orange, or red, graduating across the strip to fully green, using coloured pencils. Cut the individual leaf spikes. Cut a piece of florist wire and paint the tip the colour of the flower. Wrap and glue the coloured strip tightly around the wire beginning with the short end at the top. Curl the leaves over the needle tool.

Ruth's Top Tip

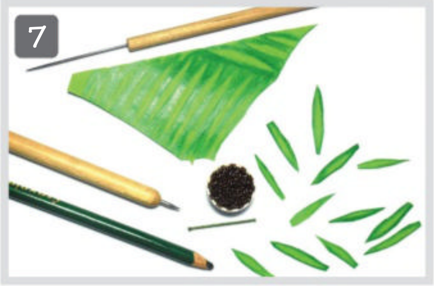
"If your markers appear to be drying up, lightly scrape the tips – they're likely just clogged with wax or tape residue."



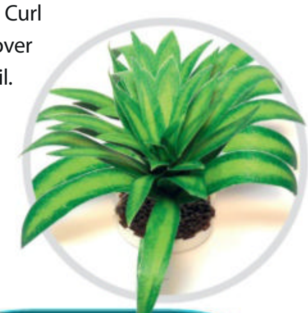
CALADIUM



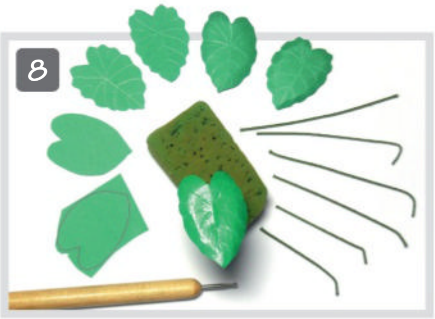
Sandwich wire inside two strips of white paper tape, for each leaf. Mark elongated, wavy-edged heart-shaped leaves on both sides of the tape with a Sharpie marker. Mark veins or coloured splatters and contrasting outer edges with a Sharpie. Cut out the leaves with ruffled edges and a deep 'V' at the stem.



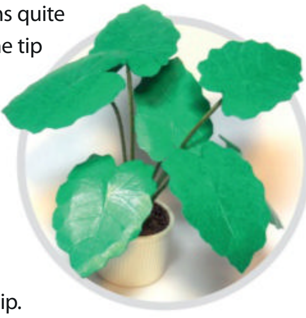
DRACAENA



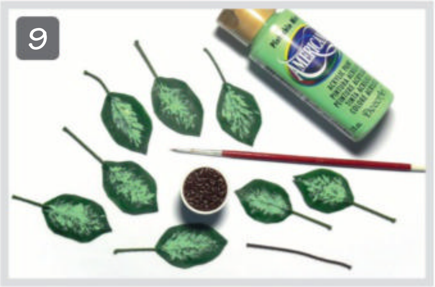
Shade varying length leaf blades, side-by-side, on bright green paper with a darker green coloured pencil. Emboss lengthwise veins in each and cut out the leaves. Glue the shorter ones in the centre to a short wire length, with the longer ones spreading outwards around them. Curl some leaves over your fingernail.



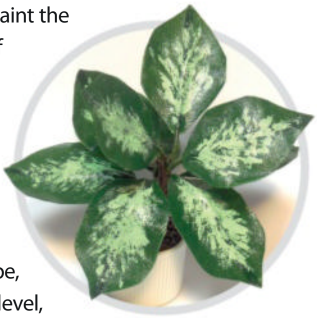
ELEPHANT'S EAR



These big leaves are sometimes a bit asymmetric, with one side narrower than the other. Cut the leaves from green paper. Emboss the veins away from the indent. Cut into each vein a little along the edges for a ruffled appearance. Cup or curl the leaves slightly. Cut the wire stems quite long. Bend the tip of each stem and glue the bend where the veins emanate, with the wire end running towards the tip.



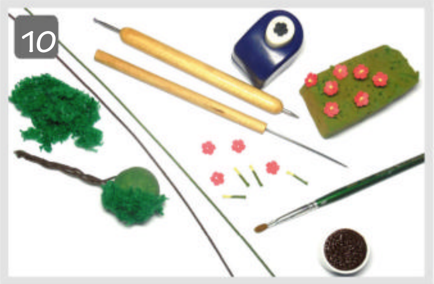
DIEFFENBACHIA



These large pointed oval leaves, emanating from a central stem, are very showy with their white or light green splotches. Cut the leaves from double-width florist tape and wire sandwiches. Paint the central area of each leaf with light green splotches and speckles. Bind the stem wires with florist tape, three at each level, around a central stem wire.

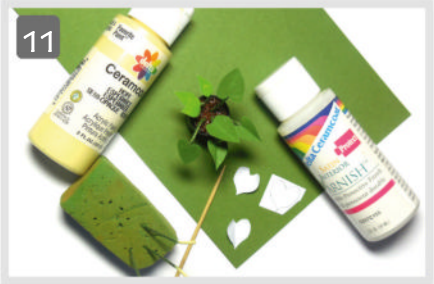
Ruth says...

"Realism in these little plants comes from lots of added colour details, ruffled or curled edges, and from varying the size and shape of the leaves using the template as a guide. Most leaves are cut from folded paper, while some have florist wire sandwiched between glued strips of florist tape, making them flexible."



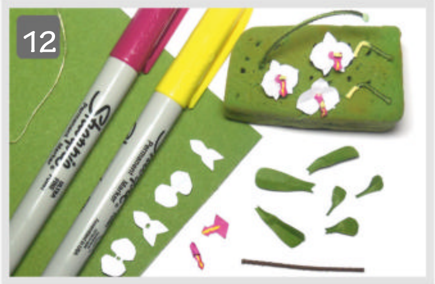
HIBISCUS TOPIARY

Plait/braid brown florist wire for a trunk. Poke the 'limbs' into the styrofoam ball and paint the ball leaf green. Roll the glue-covered ball in green scatter. Punch red flowers. Cut an equal number of short wire stems. Paint the wire tips yellow. Pierce a hole in the centre of each flower, cup the bloom, and feed the wire through the hole. Glue the flower to surround the yellow tip. Poke the stems into the ball.



CALLA LILY

Calla lilies come in almost every colour imaginable, but my favourite is white. Cut blooms from white and leaves from green paper. Curl the bloom point and near edges downwards and the lobes upwards. Cut varying length wire stems. Paint the bloom wire tips yellow. Glue a white bloom overlapping each yellow painted wire tip. Shade the bloom's base yellow green. Cluster two or three varying height blooms inside shorter leaf stems. Gloss the leaves.



ORCHID

Cut five varying sized leaves from green paper. Emboss a central vein and curl them a bit. Cut an arched florist wire stem. Dip the tip in light green paint, let it dry and re-dip it to form a tiny bud. Cut five short florist wires, paint the tips yellow and bend them forward. Mark remaining pattern halves on folded paper. Cut, shade with fuchsia and yellow, then glue a lip around each yellow tip. Cut five white paper petal and sepal sets, emboss central veins, then cup them. Pierce the stem locations in both sets. Feed them onto the opposite end of the wire and glue them against the lip. Trim the wires short and glue these blooms on alternating sides of the stem near the bud. Pinch and glue the leaves a bit above the bottom of the stem. Embed that end into the soil. Tie the stem to a florist wire 'stake'.

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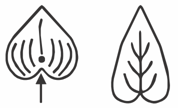
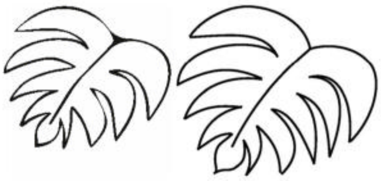
Tropical Plants
Patterns at 100%

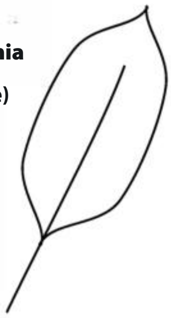
Anthurium (paper)



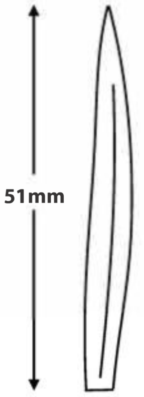
Split-Leaf Philodendron (double width tape)



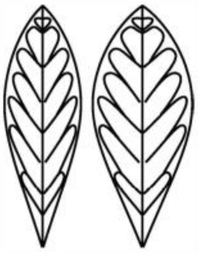
Dieffenbachia (double width tape) Make 9



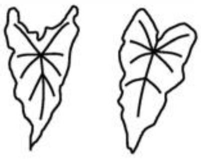
Snake Plant (paper - make in varying lengths)



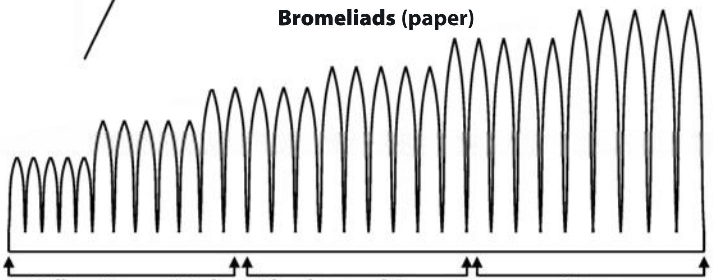
Croton (tape) Coloured Veins



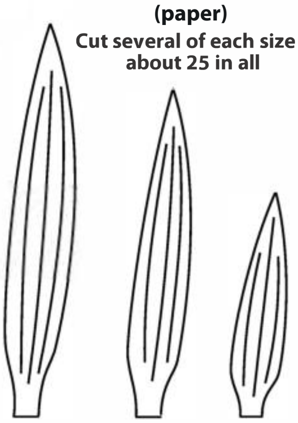
Caladium (white tape)

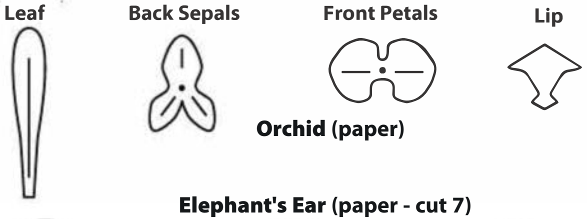


Bromeliads (paper)



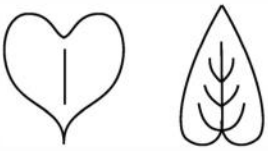
Dracaena (paper)
Cut several of each size – about 25 in all



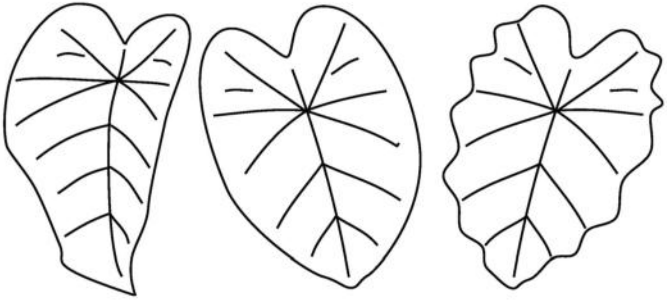


Orchid (paper)

Calla Lily (paper)



Elephant's Ear (paper - cut 7)



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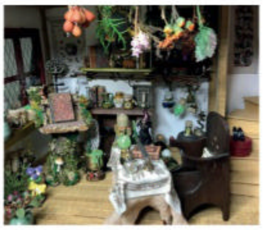
Magic Minis



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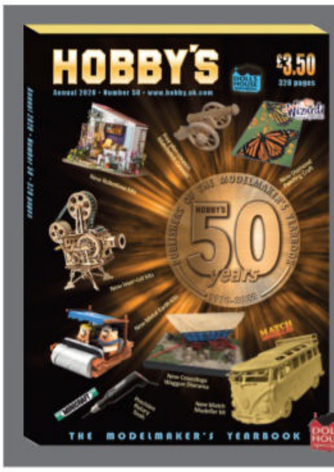

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Recycled rustic charm

Grab a chair as Kim Finch guides you through the steps to achieve this stone wall in a quick and easy manner. Let's talk about egg cartons – with a few cartons and a touch of paint, you can transform this everyday item into a showstopping stone wall!

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Egg carton lids
- Pewter grey, slate grey, white and ballet pink acrylic craft paint
- Glue of your preference

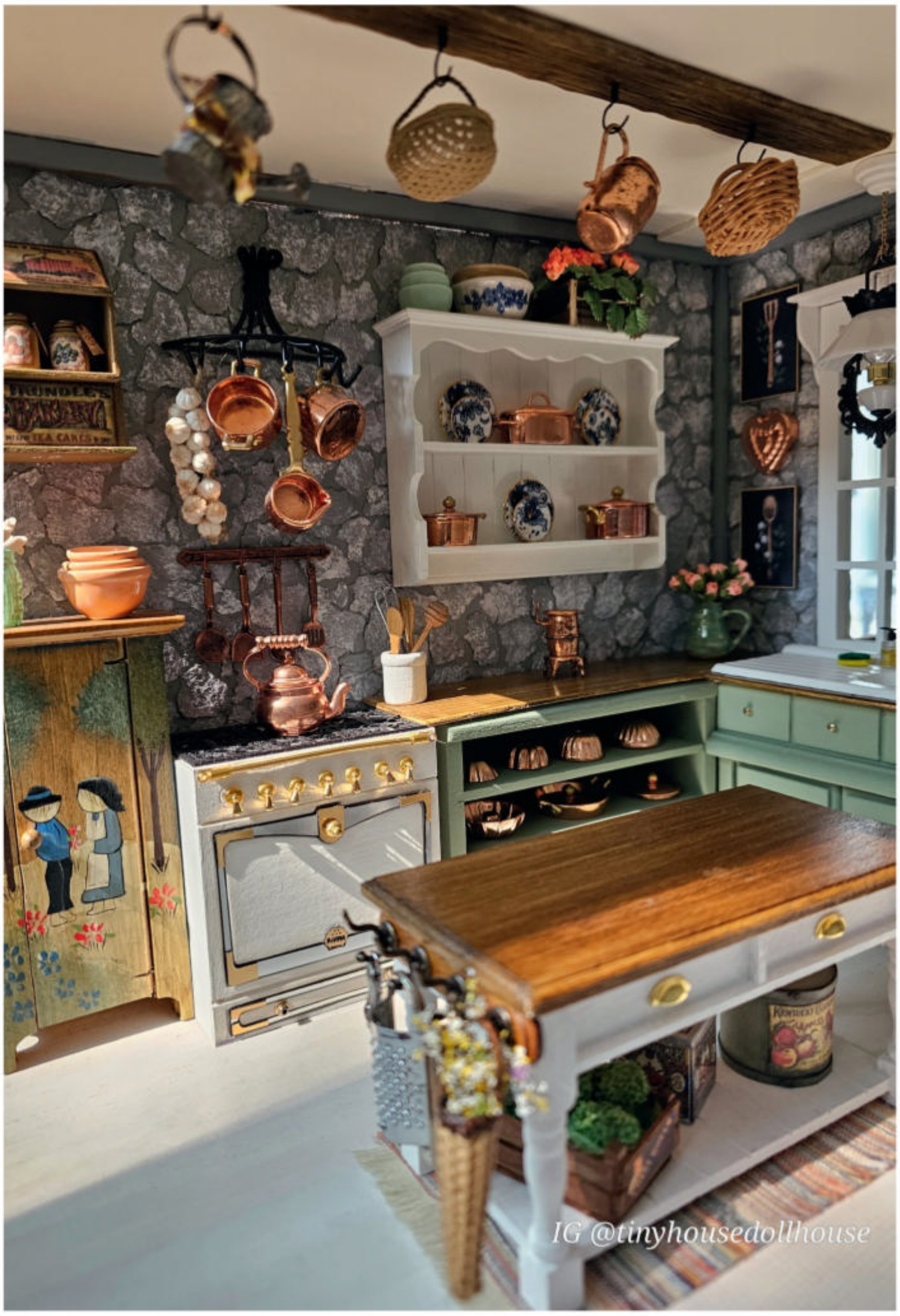
Tools required

- Paintbrushes

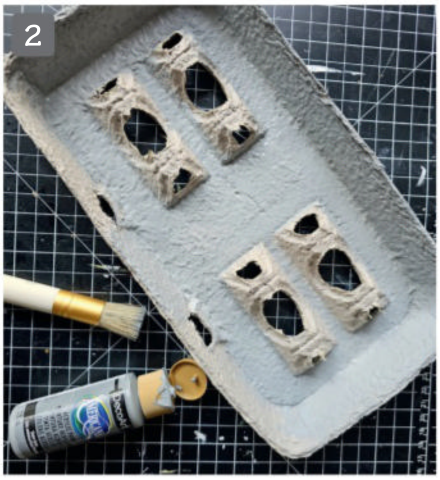
New contributor alert!

Kim says...

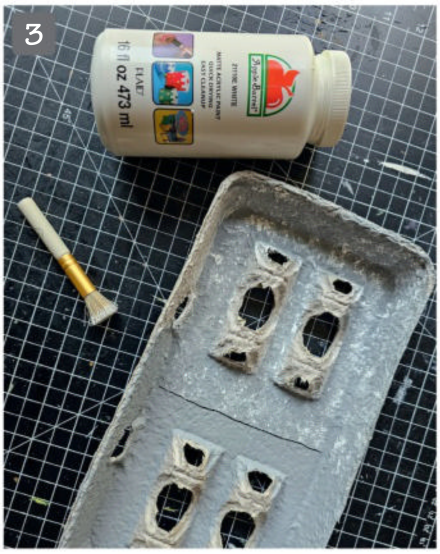
"The allure of rustic stone walls in a kitchen is simply captivating. The rugged beauty and earthy texture create a warm and inviting atmosphere, evoking feelings of comfort and nostalgia. These stone walls not only add aesthetic appeal but also serve a practical purpose by regulating the temperature, keeping the kitchen cooler in summer and warmer during winter."



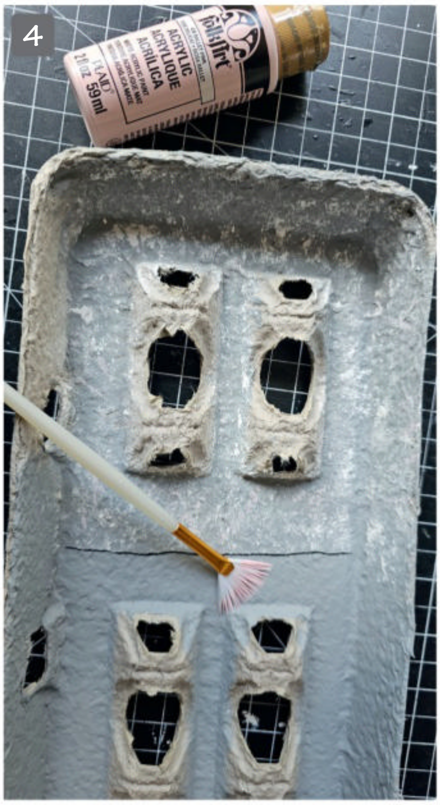
1 Give the entire room a light wipe down, then apply two coats of pewter grey paint, allowing it to dry completely.



2 Using a paintbrush, coat the inside of the egg carton lid with slate grey paint and let it dry.



3 Lightly dab or stipple white paint on top of the grey paint, ensuring that the grey shows through. Let it dry completely.

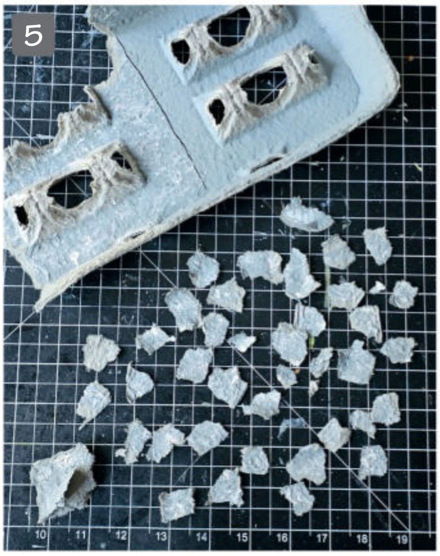


4 Add a hint of colour by applying a small amount of ballet pink paint using a feathery paintbrush. This will complement the grey and white palette. Once the egg cartons have dried, it's time to create the 'stones'. No chisels required, don't worry!

INFO

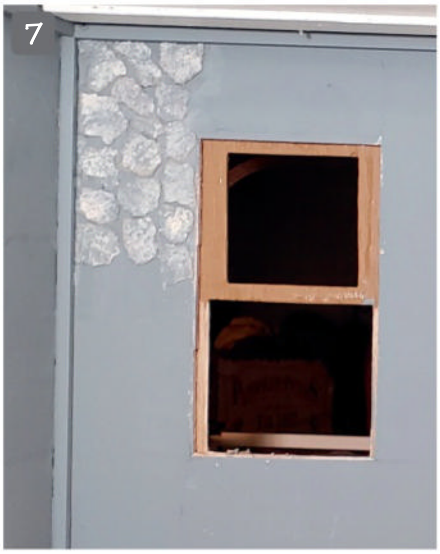
For more visit:

@tinyhousedollhouse



5 Tear pieces from the carton lids in various shapes and sizes. I used pieces ranging from 1/4in to 1in. Tear smaller stones to fill in any gaps or holes you come across. The rough edges created by tearing add depth and dimension to the stones. Additionally, the straight edges are perfect for using along floors, ceilings, or trim work. The number of stones required will depend on the size of the wall or room you are working on.

6 Peel off the extra egg carton lid paper from the back of each stone. This will improve the adhesion of the glue to the wall.

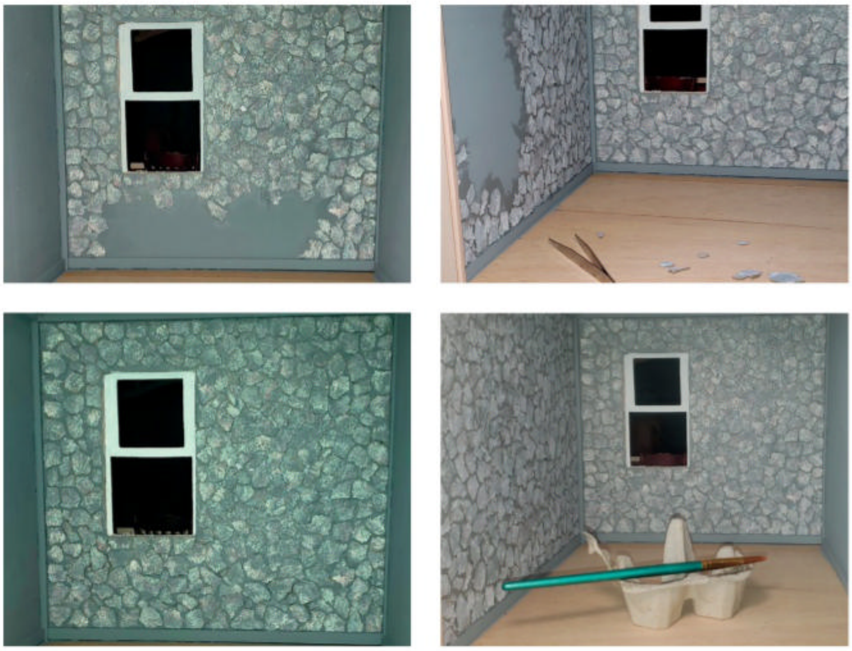


7 Now, the fun part begins! Start in one corner of the room and glue your starter stone. Build off each stone, leaving a small space between each stone. For the most natural-looking rock pattern, work from one side of the wall to the other. Avoid jumping around, as it may result in an uneven appearance. Use stones with straight edges along the floors, ceilings and trim work.

8 That's it! How beautiful and effortless is this technique? Welcome the outdoors into your space and create a transformation that will continue to delight for years to come.

Keep your eyes peeled for more projects to improve your dolls house décor from Kim soon!

Progression of the wall



Classic pedal car

What fun on a lovely summer day to take a spin in this classic mid-century pedal car! Its over-sized wheels make it particularly stable and substantial-looking, providing a safe ride for even the smallest ones in your dolls house.

YOU WILL NEED

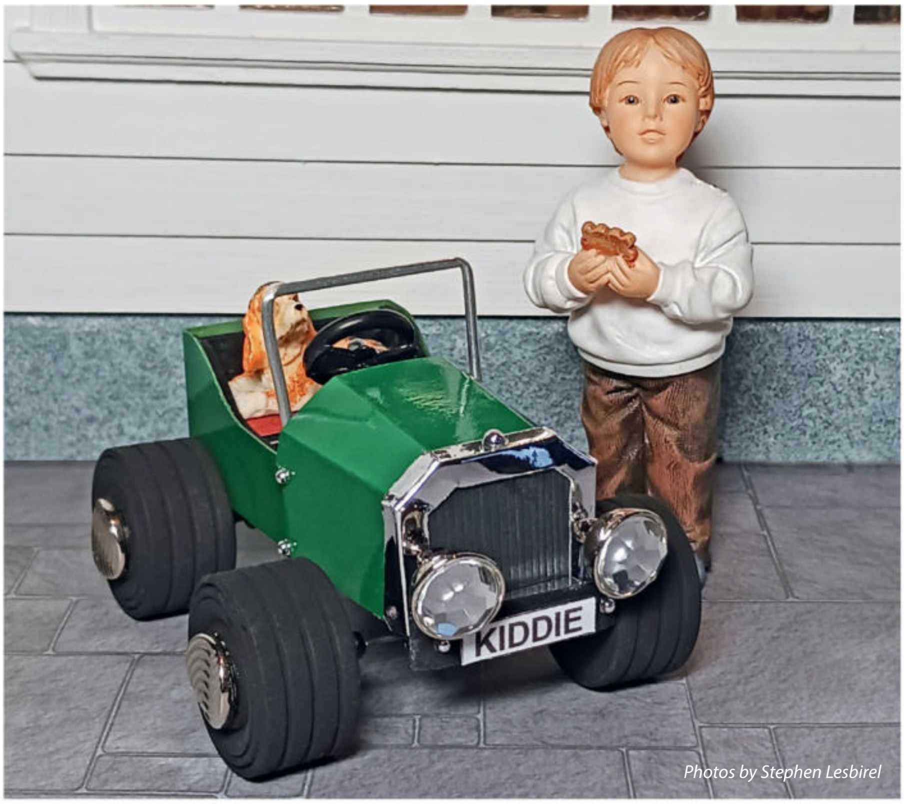
Materials required

- 4x 1in (25mm) wooden wheels (leevalley.com)
- 1/8in (3mm) diameter dowel
- 1/16in (2mm) by ¼in (6mm) stripwood
- Small wood beads
- Suede-textured paper
- Heavy matt board or illustration board
- Black heavy scrapbook paper or card
- Silver and car colour choice shiny Bristol board
- Red reflective ribbon
- Screw-eyes to fit dowel
- 5/8in (16mm) black plumbing O-ring
- Two 3/8in (10mm) domed crystal buttons
- Four flat silvery buttons
- 2x ¼in (6mm) silvery jump rings*
- 1/16in (2mm) and 1/8in (3mm) silver domed stickers
- Aluminium tubing
- 19-gauge steel wire
- Black and matching car colour acrylic paint
- Black felt marker
- Wood stain
- White glue
- Superglue

Tools required

- Knife and steel ruler
- Small saw and mitre-box
- Ball stylus
- Small hand-drills
- Needle-nose pliers
- Needle files
- Corsage pin
- 1/8in (3mm), 3/16inin (5mm), and ¼in (6mm) hole punches
- Wire cutters

*Or make your own jump rings by winding wire around a ¼in (6mm) dowel


Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

Wheels, pedals and axles

1 Paint the wooden wheels black. Superglue a silvery button to the outside centre of each wheel. Cut a 1¼in (32mm) dowel rear axle. Paint it black. Glue a disk bead to one end and superglue the bead to the inside of a wheel. Top tip: Since the pedals are just for show, you can simplify construction by using a second dowel length for the front axle. Optionally, cut a 1¾in (41mm) front axle from heavy wire. Cut two 3/16in (5mm) square pedals from matt board and paint them black. Split the matt board layers in two and emboss a centre groove on each half for the wire. Form the front axle as shown in the template, sandwich the wire between the pedal halves and glue them together.

Floor, frame pieces and attached axles

2 Cut two ½in (13mm) and one 1in (25mm) long frame pieces from stripwood. Cut the floor from matt board. Embed a steering column screw-eye into the top of the floor and into a ½in (13mm) length of stripwood glued underneath. Glue the frame pieces to the top of the floor. Paint this assembly black. Drill through the matt board and into the wood above to embed the four screw-eyes in the bottom of the floor. Slide the rear axle through the back screw-eyes, glue a bead onto its end, and superglue it to the inside of a wheel. Turn one front screw-eye so the end of the front axle can slide through the other screw-eye as far as possible. Re-adjust the screw-eye and slide the other end of the axle into it. Superglue beads to both ends of the wire and superglue the beads to the inside of the two remaining wheels.

Body

3 Cut a ¾in (19mm) by 1 1/8in (29mm) back, ¾in (19mm) by 1 1/8in (29mm) seat, two 5/16in (8mm) by 9/16in (14mm) seat supports, two 9/16in (14mm) by 1in (25mm) nose sides, and the 9/16in (14mm) by 1in (25mm) nose top from matt board. Refer to the template and cut the dashboard, two body sides, the nose front, and two nose wedge-shapes from matt board. Mark the matt board edges with the black felt marker. Glue the back between the sides and glue the seat supports against the inside of the back and sides. Glue the seat onto its supports and against the back. Paint this assembly black and glue it atop the floor. Glue the nose side pieces against the front edges of the sides, and onto the floor even with the floor edges. Glue the nose front onto the floor and against the nose sides. Glue the wedge-shaped pieces to the top of the sides and to the nose front. Let set. Glue the nose top onto the wedge-shaped pieces and the front of the nose.

Steering wheel and dashboard

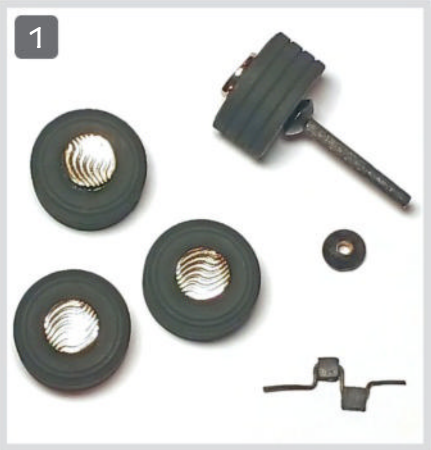
4 Cut the black card steering wheel's central 'spider' and the matt board dashboard. Stain the dashboard. Cut the spider again from shiny silver Bristol board and glue it to the card. Glue a black card punched circle to the centre of the spider and a domed sticker in the centre. Superglue the O-ring to the ends of the spider. Drill the centre hole in the dashboard for the dowel steering column. Punch two ¼in (6mm) black card dials and glue them to the dashboard. Apply tiny specks of superglue using the corsage pin at their edges and press on jump ring surrounds. Cut a 1½in (38mm) dowel steering column and paint it black. Glue the dashboard to the inside edges of the nose pieces. Slide the steering column through the dashboard and from the car's underside, use tweezers through the floor cut-out to seat it into the floor's screw-eye. Superglue the centre back of the spider to it.

Body skin

5 Measure your car and adjust the template patterns if needed. Cut the shiny card sides and back as one piece. Emboss and fold the back corners and front tabs. Paint the white edges. Smear a very thin coat of glue under the front tabs and all along the sides and back. Press the shiny card onto the sides and back of the car. Cut the shiny card nose as one piece. Emboss and fold on the lines conforming to the matt board nose. Paint the white edges. Smear glue thinly and press this piece onto the nose and the previously applied side tabs.

Radiator and seat cushion

6 Emboss close ridges in black card and glue it to the nose front. Cut, emboss, fold and glue silver Bristol board 'chrome' around the end of the nose, surrounding the 'grill'. Press a larger domed sticker to the top of the radiator as its cap. Cut a suede-textured paper seat cushion and spot glue it in place.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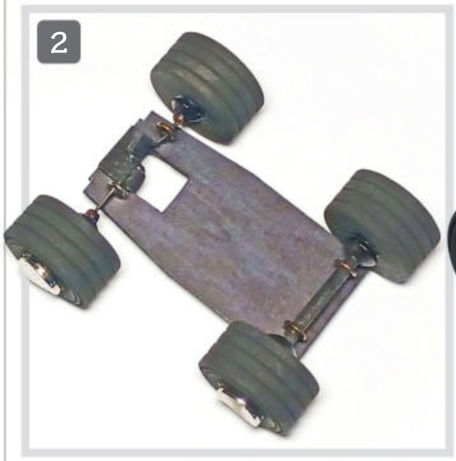
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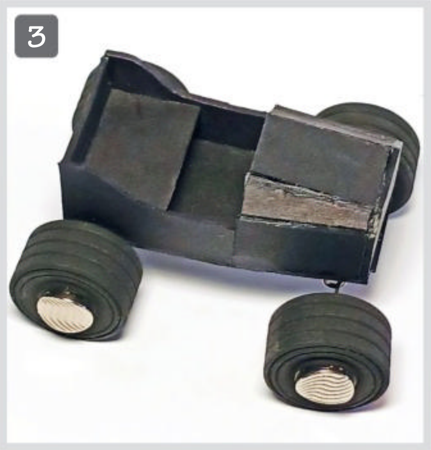
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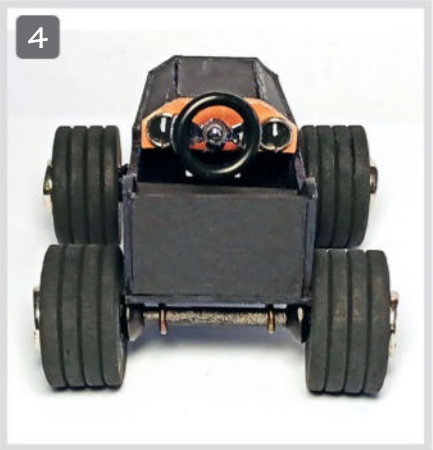
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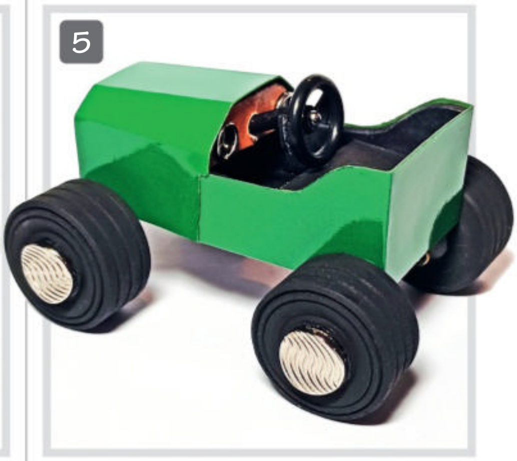
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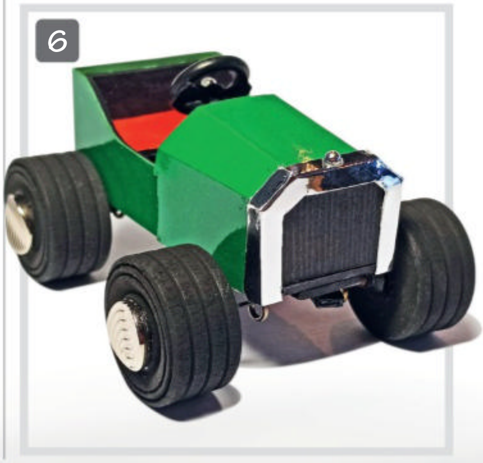
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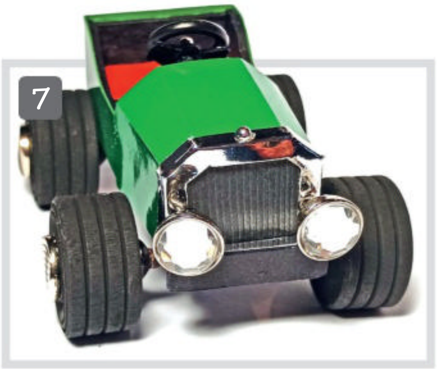
Team Top Pick!

"This is a great little piece to build for those in the family who are classic car fans!"
Ady

7



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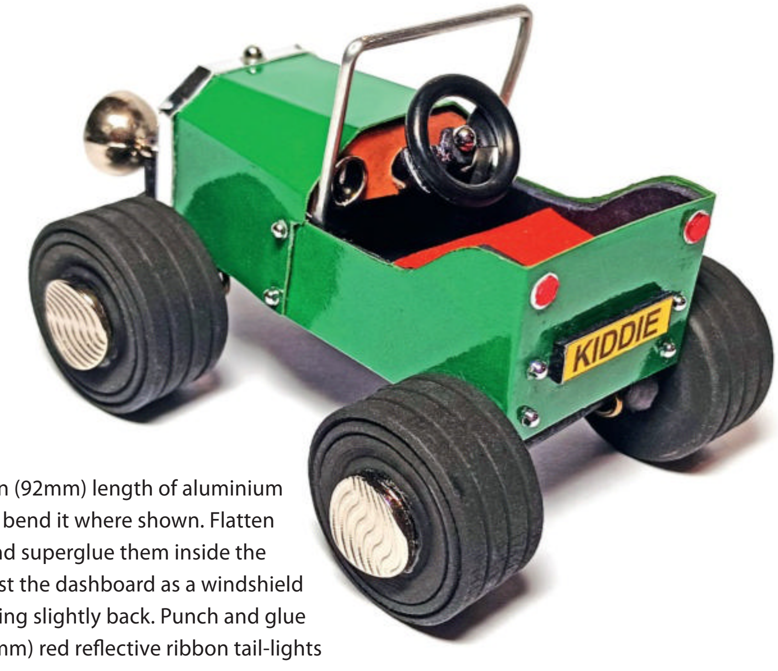


Lights and front bumper

7 Cut two ⅛in (3mm) by ½in (13mm) light mounts from matt board and paint them black. Niche the tops to fit your crystal button shanks and superglue them to the mounts as headlights. Cut two 3/16in (5mm) by ¾in (19mm) matt board spacers, glue them together, paint them black, and glue shiny silver card to the upper edge. Glue this across the front projection, with its top edge even with the floor. Cut a ¼in (6mm) by 1⅛in (29mm) matt board bumper, curve the ends back, paint it black and glue the light mounts to the back. Centre the bumper on the spacers.

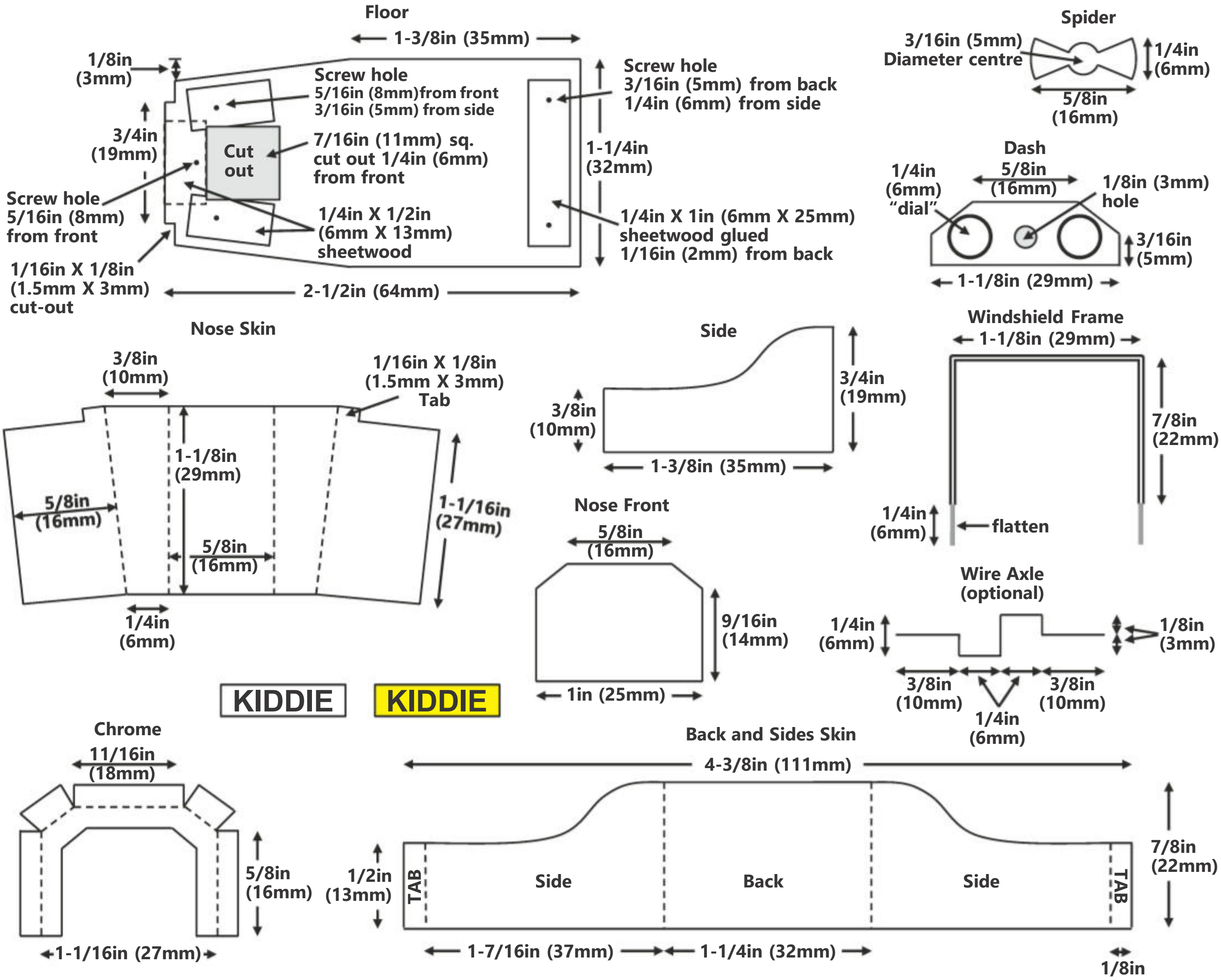
Trim

8 Cut a 3⅜in (92mm) length of aluminium tubing and bend it where shown. Flatten the ends and superglue them inside the sides against the dashboard as a windshield frame, leaning slightly back. Punch and glue two ⅛in (3mm) red reflective ribbon tail-lights to two punched 3/16in (5mm) silvery Bristol board 'surrounds'. Glue these tail-lights to the car's back. Cut two 3/16in (5mm) by ¾in (19mm) matt board license plates, print and glue your license name/numbers to them, and glue the plates to the back and to the front bumper. Apply smaller sticker 'rivets' where the nose meets the sides, to the back and to the bumper.

CLASSIC PEDAL CAR TEMPLATE

Patterns at 100%

© Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel 2023


Floor
1-3/8in (35mm)
1/8in (3mm)
Screw hole 5/16in (8mm)from front 3/16in (5mm) from side
Screw hole 3/16in (5mm) from back 1/4in (6mm) from side
3/4in (19mm)
Cut out
7/16in (11mm) sq. cut out 1/4in (6mm) from front
1-1/4in (32mm)
Screw hole 5/16in (8mm) from front
1/4in X 1/2in (6mm X 13mm) sheetwood
1/4in X 1in (6mm X 25mm) sheetwood glued 1/16in (2mm) from back
1/16in X 1/8in (1.5mm X 3mm) cut-out
2-1/2in (64mm)
Spider
3/16in (5mm) Diameter centre
1/4in (6mm)
5/8in (16mm)
Dash
1/4in (6mm) "dial"
5/8in (16mm)
1/8in (3mm) hole
3/16in (5mm)
1-1/8in (29mm)
Nose Skin
3/8in (10mm)
1/16in X 1/8in (1.5mm X 3mm) Tab
1-1/8in (29mm)
5/8in (16mm)
5/8in (16mm)
1-1/16in (27mm)
1/4in (6mm)
Side
3/4in (19mm)
3/8in (10mm)
1-3/8in (35mm)
Windshield Frame
1-1/8in (29mm)
7/8in (22mm)
1/4in (6mm)
flatten
Nose Front
5/8in (16mm)
9/16in (14mm)
1in (25mm)
Wire Axle (optional)
1/4in (6mm)
1/8in (3mm)
3/8in (10mm)
3/8in (10mm)
1/4in (6mm)
KIDDIE
KIDDIE
Chrome
11/16in (18mm)
5/8in (16mm)
1-1/16in (27mm)
Back and Sides Skin
4-3/8in (111mm)
1/2in (13mm)
TAB
Side
Back
Side
TAB
7/8in (22mm)
1-7/16in (37mm)
1-1/4in (32mm)
1/8in (3mm)

Ruth's MINI TIPS

Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel continues her top tips and advice for what has worked (and not worked!) throughout her years of experience. This month, Ruth provides her top tips on electrical wiring.

Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

I've written before about electrifying a dolls house. At the time, I was repairing and adding to my large dolls house, Magnolia Hall. I might have been a little frustrated and I don't want to put anyone off doing this seemingly mammoth endeavour. Yes, it can be frustrating at times, but do it! This is a classic, if not definitive, case of 'short term pain for long term gain'. You won't remember all the effort but you will long enjoy the result.

You don't have to be an electrician to wire your dolls house; you don't even have to know what a milliamp is. Just count up all your bulbs, add the ones in your dream fixtures for the future, then choose your transformer. Better yet, know that a 40-Watt transformer will support up to 64 bulbs (at about 60ma each). This is good for a large dolls house of about 10 rooms.

Just lately I gave my dolls house a spruce up and it is now in top form. I'm currently adding a few new light fixtures too, to take full advantage of my larger transformer. Lights are pure magic! If you're intimidated by the idea of electrical wiring, I'd say go for it. It's not difficult, though precision and patience are definitely assets, and it makes such a difference, especially with a larger house with deeper rooms.

There are several kinds of transformers out there but the main newer ones convert alternating house current (AC) to direct current (DC), which provides a steady voltage output. That means your bulbs will last longer and your lights won't dim as you add more. They also have built in circuit breakers to prevent overheating. Here's a handy guide for selecting the right transformer:

▲ My dolls house bedroom, lit

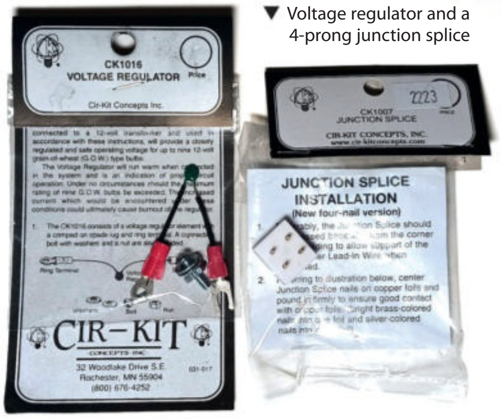
Up to 8 bulbs:
5W transformer, good for a roombox

Up to 16 bulbs:
10W transformer, good for a small dolls house

Up to 32 bulbs:
20W, great for a medium sized dolls house

Up to 64 bulbs:
40W, best for a large dolls house

A Cir-kit Concepts kit comes with a manual with all the information you need for basic wiring, but I've picked up a few additional tips and tricks recently. I learned it's a good idea to unplug the transformer when it's not in use, since it will otherwise use power so that it is ready for when you flip the switch on your dolls house lights. I discovered that a junction splice should be the newer 4-prong style, not one that just has two prongs as originally came with my earliest kits. The older style tends to melt over time and the prong's plastic housing becomes distorted, making a poor connection. I also learned that if you buy an AC transformer with future purchases in mind and it is really over-sized for the lights you currently have, you can add a voltage regulator. It's a simple, inexpensive and easily installed addition to the AC transformer that will prolong bulb life. This isn't necessary though with the newer Cir-kit Concepts transformers which now produce steady 12v DC output.



▼ Voltage regulator and a 4-prong junction splice

Some fixtures come with non-replaceable bulbs, which means you have to change the fixture when they burn out (which may still be a few years out, with light use). I only get the bi-pin type bulbs or screw-base ones since the fixtures I buy are the ones I want to keep. Know that when it appears a bi-pin bulb is burnt out, it may just need a gentle nudge so the two ends make contact and the bulb lights up. Although wiring is easy, connections must be good and even jolting your house a little can loosen a working connection. Be patient.

Miniature House
This fixture is supplied with a 12 volt bulb. 3 volt bulbs may be adapted in some cases. Check with your supplier for correct bulb and transformer.
ELECTRIC LIGHT
Houseworks
THE GOLD STANDARD IN MINIATURES
1" SCALE
DOLLHOUSE LIGHTING
To be used with all 12 volt systems • Lamps have replaceable bulbs

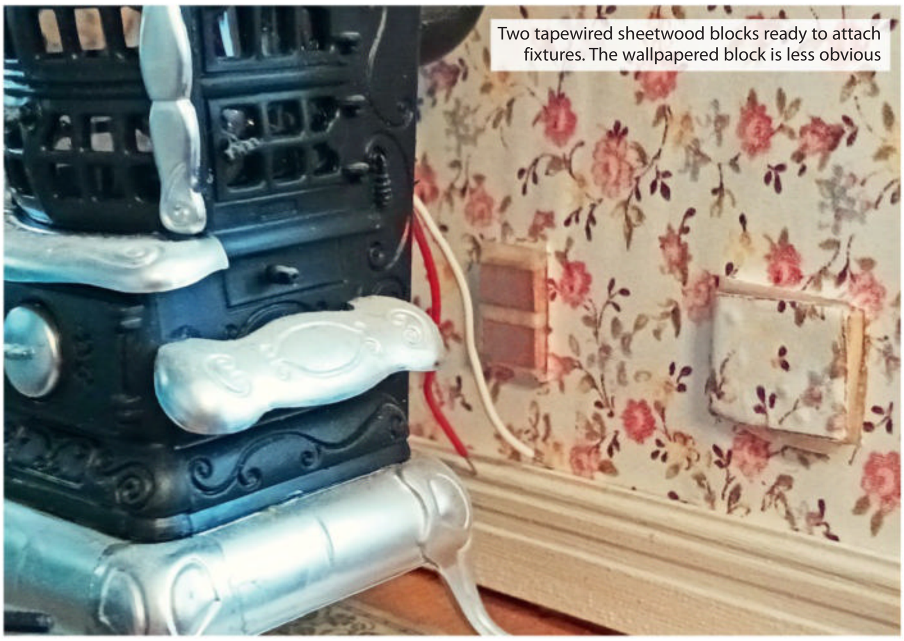
▲ Replacement bi-pin and screw-based bulbs

I have had some pretty good success with my wiring and it's been really exhilarating! Something I just realized lately that groove-backed baseboards aren't just for round wire electrifying. I had glued in a wall over a seemingly secure run of tapewire, only to find it no longer worked and my ceiling light wouldn't light. As a temporary fix until I'm prepared to take that wall out (shudder!), I ran a floor lamp's wire in the groove of a new baseboard length and bradded the wire ends into a 'live' tapewire further back.

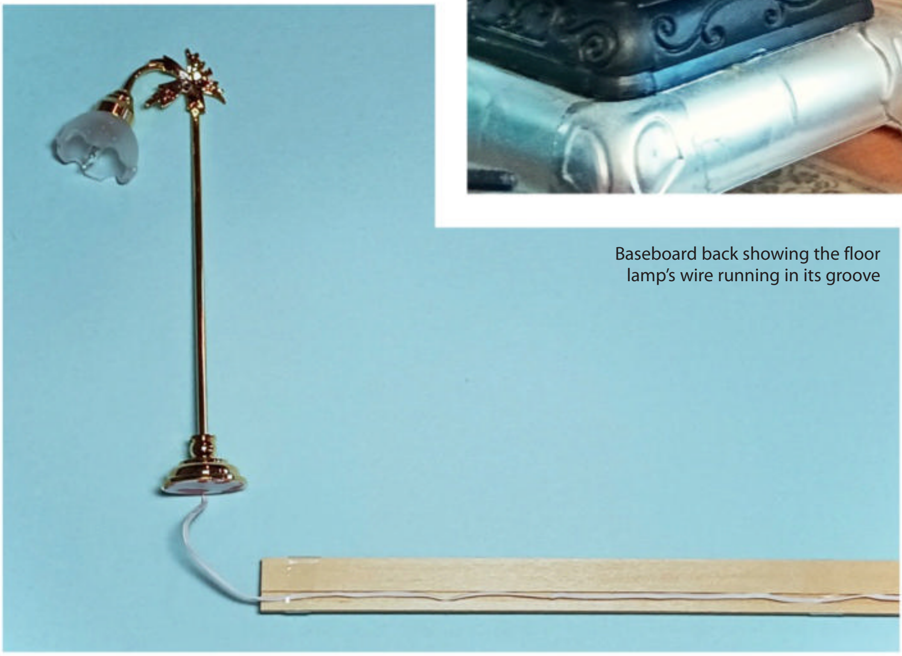
Removable wall panels make life so much easier. When I wallpapered Magnolia Hall, I was trying to think ahead to possibly wanting to change the wallpaper in future. I also knew how hard it would be to reach into my house and paste wallpaper to the wooden walls. It would be complicated too by the fact that my dad, who assembled my dolls house, had already glued on all the interior window and door casings. My solution was to take several pieces of card (actually from tights packaging) and tape together individual renditions of each wall. Once these patterns were completed, I cut an illustration board solid piece from each cobbled-together pattern. Tiny adjustments were made to each of these pieces, so that there was just the slightest space all around the edge and around each of the casings. That allowed for wallpaper to wrap 1/2in (13mm) onto the back of each piece. My real brainwave was to cut a small rectangle out of the illustration board panels 1in (25mm) above the floor at each location where I wanted to run tapewire so a lamp could be bradded in. I cut an identically sized sheetwood piece and glued it to the wall through the panel's cut-out, so I'd be sure it was in the right spot (always better to do physical placement than to depend on measurements, especially inside a dolls house room). Once the sheetwood block was secure, I removed the panel, ran tapewire over to the block, up the wall, and over that sheetwood block.

Another advantage of removable wall panels is that the tapewire can be run under the panel, so it is completely hidden. Once papered, wall panels are simply snug fit into the frame of each wall and can be popped out easily to repaper or just to add or repair the wiring. A small dab of glue can also be added if necessary to ensure a wall stays securely in place. The wall can usually still be eased away without damage, if you need to remove it for any reason later. Removable wall panels work best of course on walls that don't include sconce style lights or other fixtures that are wired direction into tapewire blocks in these walls. Even then, the brads can be removed and replaced after a fix.

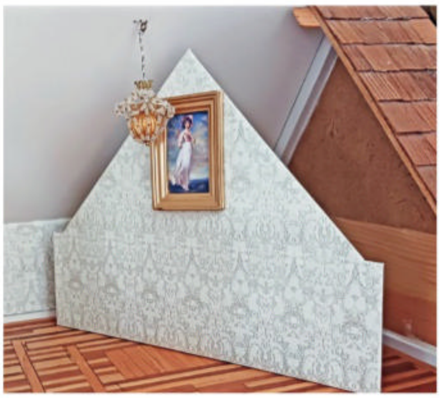
Most 12v lamps come with attached plugs, ready to insert into outlets in tapewire. The only issue with these is that they are over-sized and if used as-is are best hidden under furniture. They are very easy and reliable though but sometimes I live dangerously! I often cut them off, bare the two wires, and brad them into the tapewire directly instead. This way they are barely visible and don't detract from the room's realistic look.



Two tapewired sheetwood blocks ready to attach fixtures. The wallpapered block is less obvious



Baseboard back showing the floor lamp's wire running in its groove



▲ End panel removed

Unusual fixtures or even statement pieces are fun additions. They are not only visually rewarding but make great gifts from your family and friends, who often don't know what you might like to have but would really like to add to your collection. For these reasons, I rarely buy (or hint for) a basic light fixture – each one means something to me. Like the work in wiring itself, you won't remember that you paid for a really eye-catching fixture down the road, but you will always admire it. Many of the ones in Magnolia Hall are quite like the ones in my own home, some are my early creations from crystal beads or small shells, my large crystal chandelier was a gift from my parents, and so on. I recently bought a table lamp that reminds me very much of a Frank Lloyd Wright style. It is very unique – unlike any of my other fixtures and really doesn't belong in a Georgian style home, with mostly candle flame fixtures, but I love it. My tip though is, if you see something you really like, get it while it is available. Often suppliers' offerings change over time and that lamp you've dreamed of for so long may no longer be available when you decide to buy it. I was fortunate to buy a lovely lithophane lamp with a pastoral scene and horses for my equestrian-themed dolls house library. It's called 'Evening Ride' by Jefferson Art Lighting – I can't remember what I paid for it long ago but I love it to this day. Similar lithophane lamps are only available at auction and on resale sites today. I'll find just the right spot for my new FLW style lamp in time too.

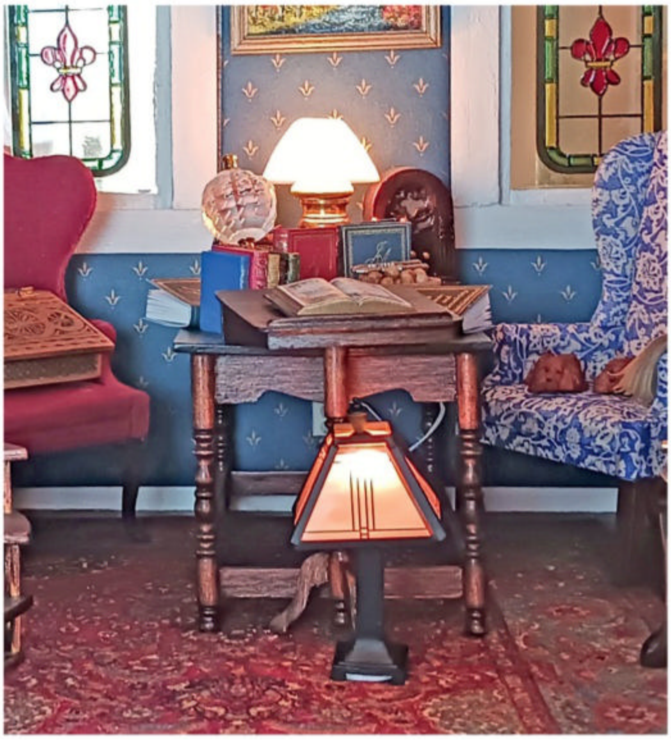
▼Three Tiffany-style lamps

I bought three battery operated Tiffany style table lamps at a local show several years ago, but I cluster them at the front of the top floor of Magnolia Hall, so I can easily access them. I love their shades and stylized naturalistic bases! The local artisan, Jan Surette of Jantiques Miniature Arts, shows her real talent in these creations but I still prefer 12v lights. So long as I have power in my own house, my dolls house does too.

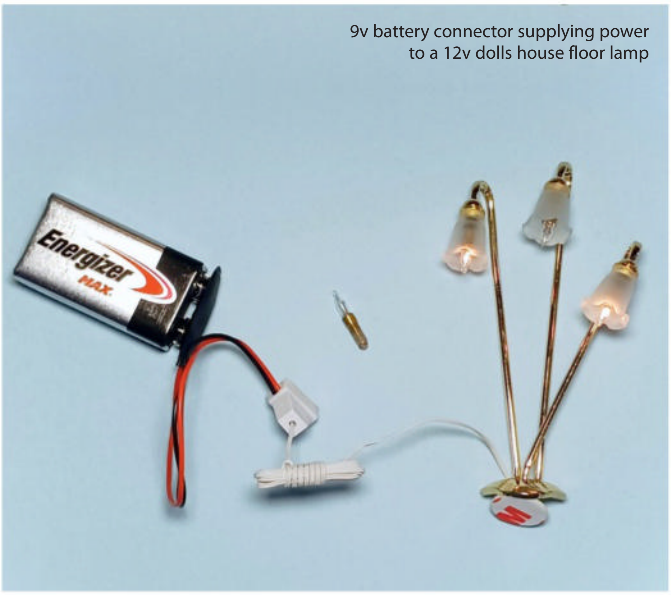
A neat little 'tool' that I picked up recently from Hobby Builders' Supply is a 9v battery connector with outlet. The description on their website (www.miniatures.com) suggests it for testing or temporary use, or maybe in a 1-light roombox. It clips onto a regular 9v battery and has a 5in cord and an outlet for a standard dolls house light's plug. Although it notes that the light will be a bit dimmer than with a transformer, it's still a great way to test whether a fixture or individual bulbs are working before doing a permanent installation. I just used this handy little 'tool' to test a new fixture and found I need to replace one of my bulbs. Useful already!

pic 10 – 9v battery connector supplying power to a 12v dolls house floor lamp

Finally, some newer items on the scene are welcome and easy ways to add light to your dolls' house. Hobby Builders' Supply has a power strip with an on/off switch, which provides 12 outlets for standard dolls house plugs. The power strip attaches to any 12v transformer and sits outside the dolls house. Most fixtures come with long wires which can be run in a narrow space under a floor, over a ceiling, or just along a baseboard to this power source. Another option is a bright or warm white set of LED strip lights, ideally paired with their simple connectors to the dolls house round or tape wire. They can be bent or even cut in shorter lengths to add light wherever it is needed. These are great for a modern style house or can be mounted at ceiling height, virtually hidden, behind a baffle or moulding.



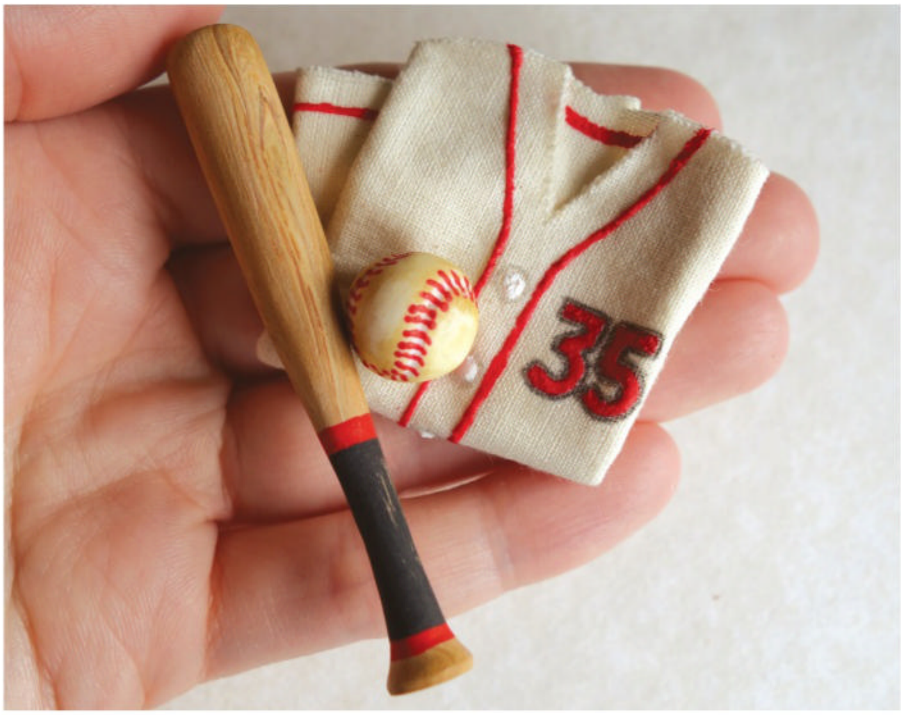
◀The Ward lamp (Hobby Builders Supply) on the floor, lithophane lamp on the table



9v battery connector supplying power to a 12v dolls house floor lamp

Strike it small!

Celebrating American pastimes, we show you how to make a retro baseball bat, ball and shirt set in 13 easy steps.



YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Polymer clay in white and caramel
- Tulip dimensional fabric paint in red and white
- Acrylic paint in red and black
- Small piece of Blu Tack
- Soft pastel in dark brown
- White material or linen
- Double-sided sticky tape

Tools required

- Pokey tool
- Toothbrush (new or used)
- Medium sized embossing tool
- 150 Grit sandpaper (small piece)
- Fine grit sandpaper (small piece)
- Cocktail stick
- Cosmetic applicator
- Fine paintbrush
- Scissors, ruler and a pencil

1 To make the baseball bat, mix white clay with a little bit of caramel to create beige. Break off a small amount of caramel clay and marble this into the beige mix to create fine streaks within the clay, as pictured. Use your fingers to delicately pull and shape the clay into the shape of a baseball bat, roughly 70mm in length and as pictured.

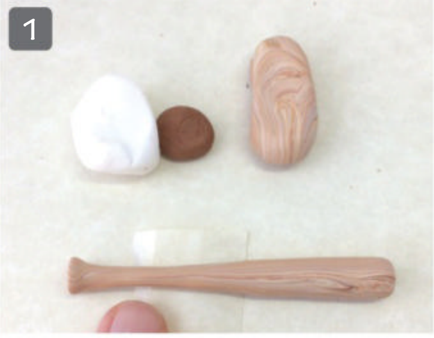
2 Use a toothbrush to lightly brush the surface of the clay to create long vertical lines; this will create a nice linear wood effect texture. Use the side of a pokey tool to create slightly deeper lines if desired. Take a small piece of folded paper and place it under the thin handle part of the bat to avoid the clay drooping. Set to one side.

3 Roll a piece of white clay into a ball shape roughly 15mm in diameter. Use a medium sized embossing tool and a pokey tool to create the stitching effect on the ball, as you would see on a real one (use the image for guidance). Bake the bat and ball as recommended.

Lynn says...

"When I think of summer in America I automatically think of baseball. It brings back a sense of nostalgia for me, watching films like A League of Their Own and Field of Dreams when I was growing up. I have decided to pay tribute to the game with a super fun and easy project."

1



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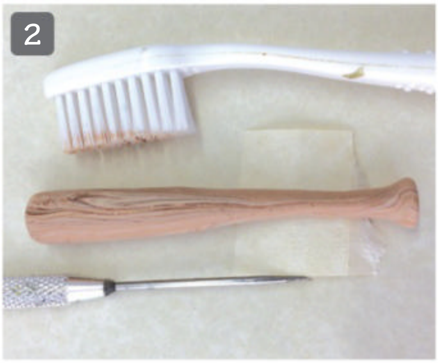

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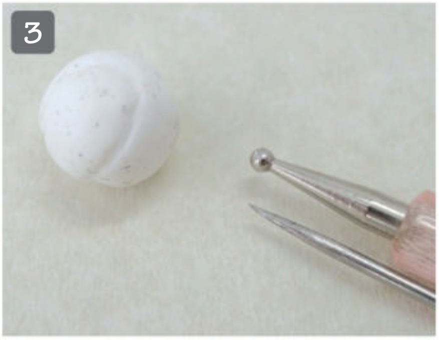

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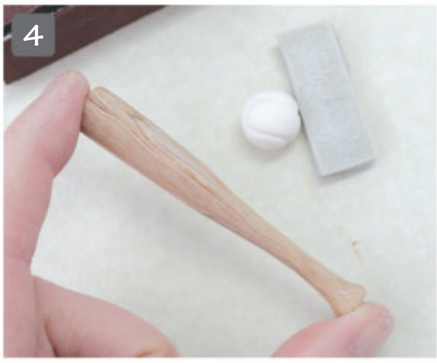


4 Sand the entire surface of the baseball bat with 150 grit sandpaper, be sure to sand in a vertical strokes; this will texture the clay surface and blend the marbling a little to create a wood effect. Use fine sandpaper to lightly sand the ball to remove any dirt or dust trapped in the clay.

5 Use red dimensional fabric paint and a cocktail stick to apply fine stitch lines to the ball, as pictured. To prevent the ball from rolling and smudging whilst drying, use a small piece of Blu Tack to hold the ball in place.

6 Use an old cosmetic applicator to apply a little brown pastel to parts of the baseball bat to resemble a used and worn appearance.

7 As in step 6, apply a little light and dark brown pastel to the ball to give it a distressed appearance. Apply simple detailing to the handle on the bat using red and black acrylic paint. You can follow my example or create your own colour scheme. Leave to dry completely.

8 To create the shirt take two pieces of white or linen fabric roughly 180mm x 170mm. Cover half of each piece of fabric in strips of double-sided tape, as pictured. Fold and stick each piece in half, to help to stiffen the fabric.

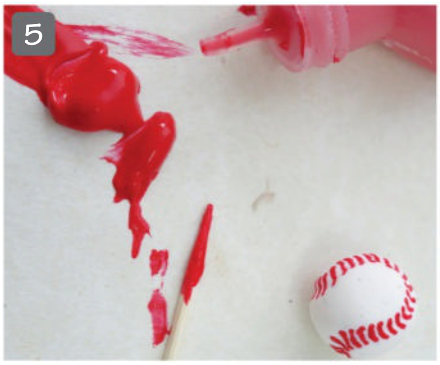
9 Take both pieces of fabric and measure an 85mm x 70mm rectangle on each. Curve the top line of each to resemble slanted shoulders. Draw a small triangle in the middle of the front panel and a dipped curve in the middle of the back panel.

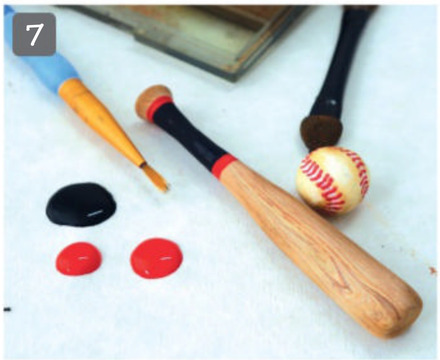
10 Cut both the front and back panels out. Run double-sided tape down the outer edges of the back panel and attach the front panel directly on top of it.

11 Turn the shirt over. Run double-sided tape down the outer edges then fold each side in by roughly 15mm and stick into position, as if you were folding the body of a shirt. Lightly scrunch the fabric with your fingers to create creases.

12 Turn the shirt over. Fold the shirt diagonally up and under and fix into position using double-sided tape to resemble a folded shirt.

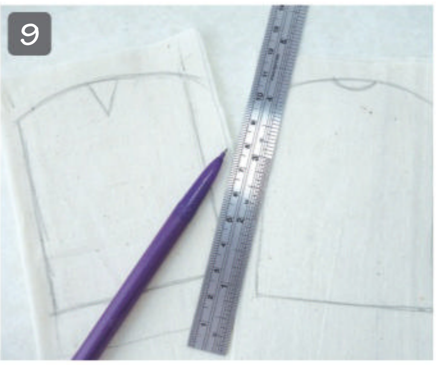
13 Use red dimensional fabric paint (and the precision tip on the bottle) to pipe detail on the folded baseball shirt. Neaten any wonky lines using the tip of a pokey tool.
Use white dimensional fabric paint to create buttons. Leave the fabric paint to dry fully then create definition around each button and number using pencil.

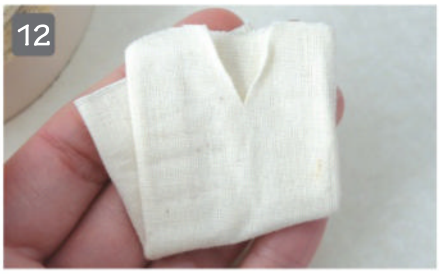


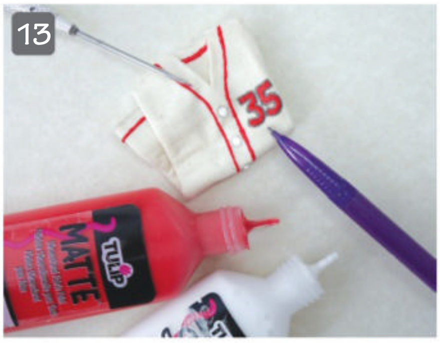


Lynn's Top Tip

"When creating polymer clay miniatures that are round or long, such as in this project, the shape of the clay can easily distort. To avoid distortion try applying pastel colour and texturing after the pieces are baked and hardened."







For loads more miniature projects...
head to page 38 to find out how you can access our DigitalPlus!

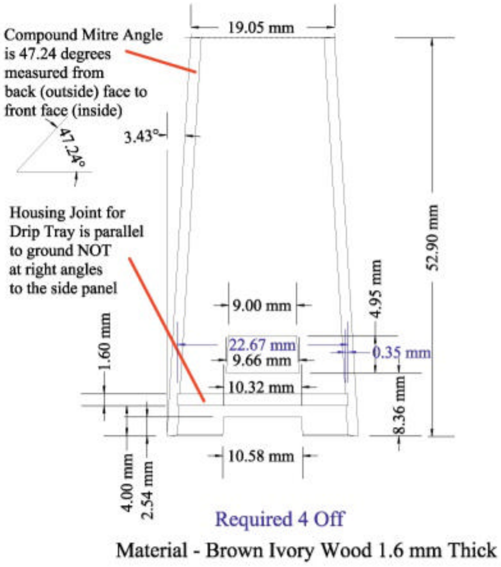
Limbert umbrella stand

Following on from Moi Ali's 'A family passion' interview with Ian Macaulay in the May issue, where he detailed how he created dolls houses for his wife and daughter, he now shares with you how you can create a Charles Limbert umbrella stand.

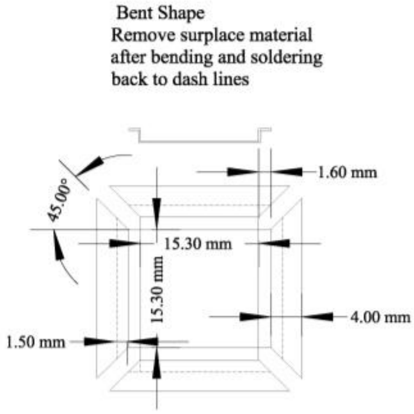
1/12TH SCALE DRAWING

Drawings

Four sides, Drip Tray Surface Development (0.2 mm thick Copper) and Drip Tray Support

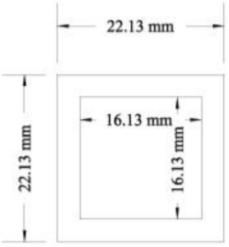

Compound Mitre Angle is 47.24 degrees measured from back (outside) face to front face (inside)
47.24°
3.43°
19.05 mm
52.90 mm
Housing Joint for Drip Tray is parallel to ground NOT at right angles to the side panel
9.00 mm
4.95 mm
22.67 mm
9.66 mm
0.35 mm
1.60 mm
10.32 mm
8.36 mm
10.58 mm
4.00 mm
2.54 mm
Required 4 Off
Material - Brown Ivory Wood 1.6 mm Thick

Drip Tray - Surface Development


Bent Shape
Remove surplace material after bending and soldering back to dash lines
45.00°
1.60 mm
15.30 mm
15.30 mm
4.00 mm
1.50 mm

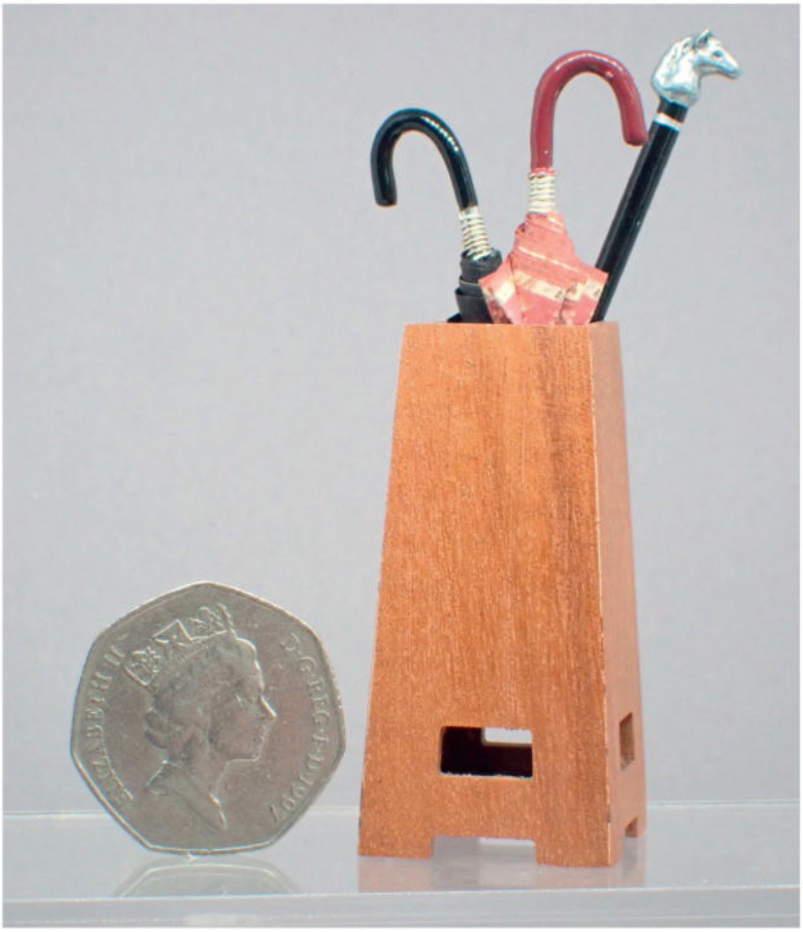
Drip Tray Support

© Ian Macaulay 2023

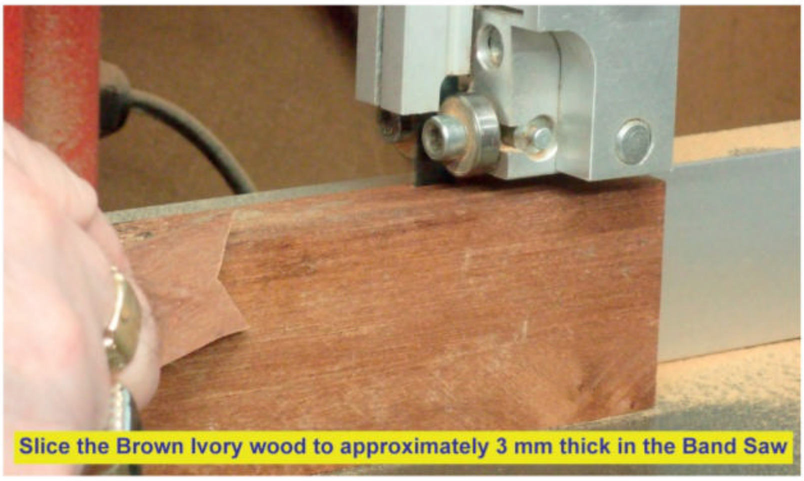

22.13 mm
16.13 mm
16.13 mm
22.13 mm

Material - Brown Ivory Wood 2.6 mm Thick

Required 1 Off



Wood preparation

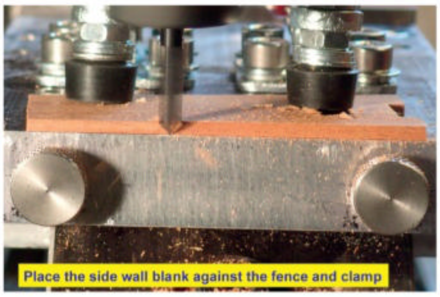

Slice the Brown Ivory wood to approximately 3 mm thick in the Band Saw

Slice the wood in a band saw or other suitable method to 2.5mm

Plane the wood to a finished thickness of 1.6mm. I use a Proxxon Thicknesser or a Sander Thicknesser (most of my 1/12th scale models need exact 1/12th scale sizes not available to buy).

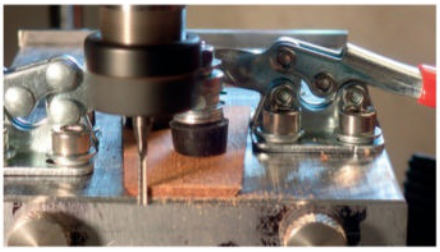
Cut out detail items jigs and fixtures or CNC
Cut to exactly match the drawing sizes (I use a mini CNC milling machine but any suitable method that will give the exact dimensions can be used)

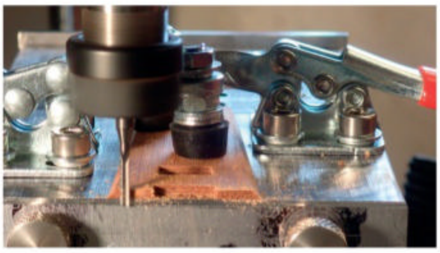
Mitre angles



Cut the compound mitre angles on the sides of the sides of the umbrella stand (I use a sine vice and fixture to hold the detail at the correct angle in conjunction with a 90 degree 'V' tool, ½ angle 45 degrees to make up the compound angle specified. Note: the artisan of old would have used a compound 'shooting board' and hand plane to cut the compound angles on the full-sized umbrella stand).

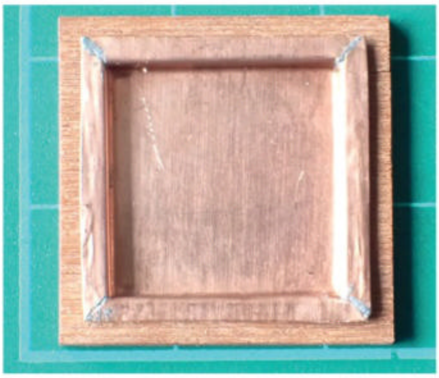
Top and tail angles and compound housing angle





Similar operation as the above except the angle is reset to match the slope of the side detail and the tool this time is a 1.6mm straight bit. The chamfer is on the inside for the bottom mitre and on the outside for the top chamfer

Drip tray 0.2 mm copper plate



Cut out the surface development. Note: Most edges can be cut with a good pair of scissors. However, the fine detail of the corners needs a jeweller saw with a fine blade size 06 or 04, but this will not work on such thin copper. You will need to double sided tape a 3mm thick piece of wood to the copper before cutting the detail with the jewellers saw. The rule of thumb is that three teeth of the saw blade need to touch the material being cut otherwise the blade will jam making sawing very difficult if not impossible. Bend along the lines to make the tray. Soft solder the mitre edges to complete the tray. Now you can trim the edges to the inside line. The outer line was only there to give you something to hold on to while bending took place. Glue the drip tray into the drip tray support.

Dry fit
Dry fit is to test that all operations went well. Two rubber bands, one top and one bottom, should hold it together exactly as the drip tray is keeping the alignment for you.

Wood dye for fumed oak finish
If you want the fumed oak variation, now is the time to stain all details before gluing. The stain should be of the spirit-based kind, water-based stain will cause the wood to move and possibly destroy all your exacting work. A dark oak or antique oak should be fine. Note: fumed oak finish was made by fuming the oak in ammonia and I believe the cheapest form of ammonia was urine! - the ammonia reacts with the tannin in the oak to give the dark colour.

Glue up
Third hand to help hold it together.

About Charles Limbert

Designed and made by Charles P. Limbert (1854 – 1923),

Charles Limbert was best known for pieces of furniture created in the style of the American Arts and Crafts movement. Charles was the son of a cabinet maker and went on to work as a furniture salesman in Grande Rapids before opening up his own factory in 1902. His most celebrated works include his solidly made oak furniture, possessing unique yet simple lines. He was notably influenced by the Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

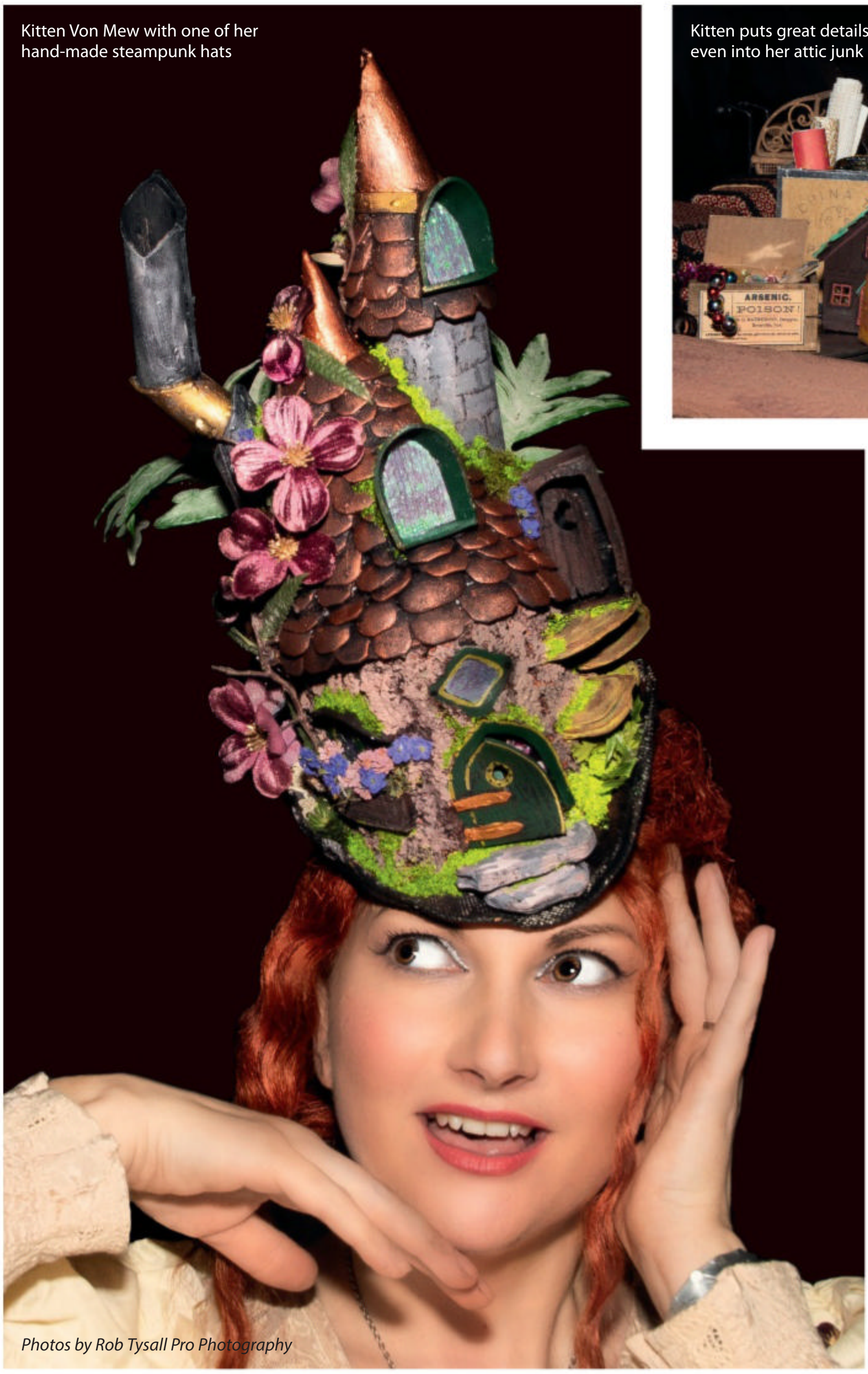
Here I turn one of his catalogue pieces into a 1/12th scale item of furniture for a dolls house. The design is simple but the structure is a complex mitre joint and a sloping housing joint. A timeless piece that would grace the hallway of any dolls house. Oak wood was the choice of Charles, for his furniture, however oak has an open grain and is medium to coarse in texture. Therefore I have chosen brown ivory wood (Berchemia discolor) which has a closed grain and medium to fine in texture, much more suitable for a scaled down dolls house miniature. Brown ivory wood is very hard and therefore needs to be worked with strong sharp tools.

To finish
To get the best finish, give your model a coat of grain filler and lightly sand flat. The choice is then to wax or varnish. If varnish then I would recommend that it is air brushed on, as a thick coat of varnish would destroy the look all your careful work.

Footnote: I can supply a .dxf file of the drawings or a G-Code file if you supply the Post Processor name and if the Post Processor is listed in my copy of Aspire software – donations to UK McMillan Breast Cancer.

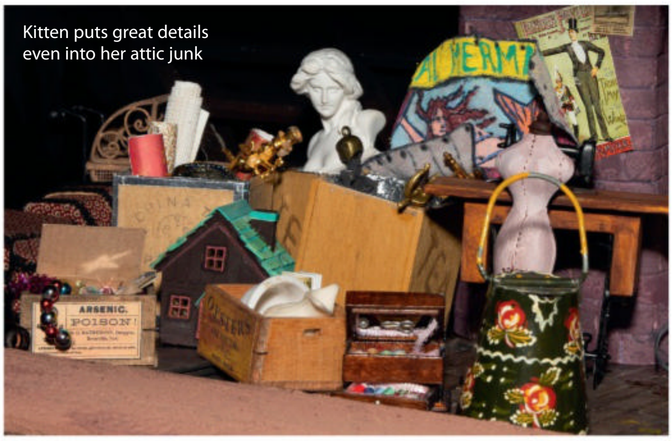
Kitten's house of mystery and intrigue

You're invited to wander through Kitten Von Mew's mysterious old house that belonged to Espra Cogsmith. Perhaps you can solve the puzzle as to what's happened to him…



Kitten Von Mew with one of her hand-made steampunk hats

Photos by Rob Tysall Pro Photography



Kitten puts great details even into her attic junk

It's not everyone who can wear an outside 'privvy' on their head and still look elegant. But this unusual Steampunk style of Kitten Von Mew of Stratford-upon-Avon, is a style she loves, and it reflects not only in her fashion sense, but also in her dolls house miniatures.

There's nothing traditional or even 'normal' in her intriguing old house – her debut doll's house incidentally. It's a house full of mystery – clearly it was – maybe still is, a house that's been lived in and used. It's packed full of photographs, letters, posters and documents – all kinds of clutter and collectables in fact. Even the cupboard drawers are filled with personal belongings and things amassed if you care to look.

And there is such a lot of items scattered around the floor. Had someone been searching for something? Was the owner looking for something? And where is he? He seems to have vanished without trace. Has he disappeared forever, or has he just popped out and will be back any minute?

The owner is - or was, Espra Cogsmith, there's talk of him being a Ringmaster at the circus. The old photographs around the walls certainly indicate he knew some strange people from the sideshows – a bearded lady; an octopus that's now breaking out of its tank, and even a mermaid who he fell in love with and enticed into his bathroom – perhaps to his downfall. Because Espra Cogsmith has vanished into thin air!

Each room reveals a lived-in look, a leather chair is worn with horse-hair stuffing poking through; there's a damp patch on the ceiling causing mould on a wall which needs fixing. It's all very strange. And what is going on in the attic? A portrait of a little girl riding a zebra and a young woman in Victorian clothing – how strange that they look like Kitten and her daughter, Betsy. And below the house, there's a fortune teller's shop. Look very closely and someone has recently had their tea leaves read. Some say it was Espra Cogsmith, just before he disappeared. Was he afraid of what the future held in store for him?

It might seem so, because – so rumour goes, his mermaid who lived in his bathroom loved him very much but saw that he was a bit of a ladies' man and a cad. She would have spotted the ladies boots and stockings left there by some female guest and the love letters from the Siamese twins. Did the mermaid realise what was going on and plot some dastardly revenge? Remember, mermaids are sirens and they lure gentlemen to the demise.

There are missing posters on the front of newspapers (which had landed through his door) he hasn't been picking them up, he hasn't been taking his milk in from the doorstep either. What could have happened to Espra Cogsmith? Maybe we will find out one day – or maybe it will remain a puzzle forever.

Kitten had her mysterious house on display at the Spring Miniatura Show in March, drawing lots of curious people to look deeply into its fascinating rooms and hear the strange tales of what has gone on there. "My vision is that there are hints at the owner's life and past dotted around the place," explained Kitten. "But where has he gone? What happened to him?"

As her first dolls house project, Kitten is proud of her efforts. She has always loved tiny things from a very early age. As a child she enjoyed Sylvanian Families rather than Barbie dolls and when at college she wanted to be an animation prop maker. "That never happened in real life," Kitten remarked. "But I enjoyed the dream!"

A few years ago, she made a suitcase dolls house for her little daughter – although realised that she actually wanted a dolls house for herself. This was during the pandemic, so when lockdown eased for a while, she went to a car boot sale where she spotted a Sue Ryder 1/12th scale Georgian dolls house with an attic and four rooms. She bought it for £15.

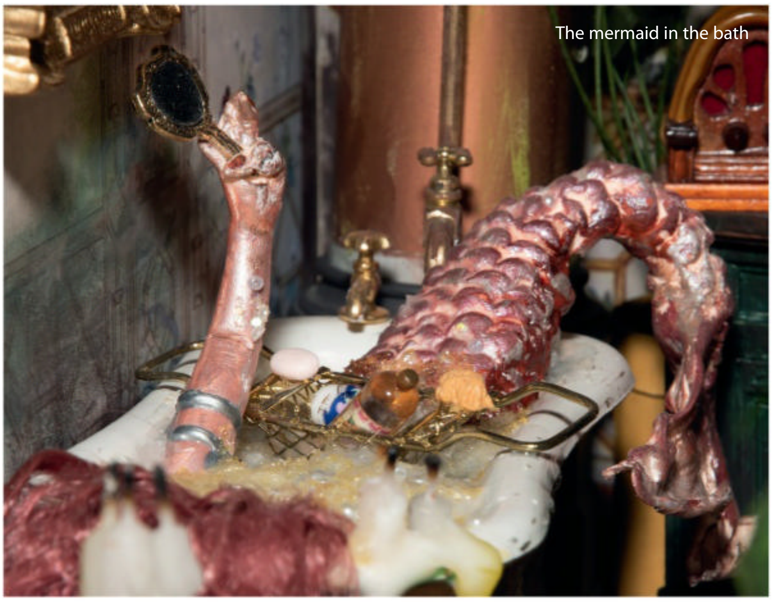
▼ A tiny Victorian scrapbook

Oil painting by Kitten's mum of her daughter on a zebra

▲ Another sculpture of a bearded lady from the circus

Old photos of a bearded lady and a Victorian woman who looks remarkably like Kitten

A bottle of poison!


The mermaid in the bath

"It wasn't glamorous by any means," she added. "But I decided to make it my own personal project. It had broken bits and missing internal doors. It seemed huge to me back then, but it is actually very modest and not large at all in the grand scale of things! Two up, two down with an attic room.

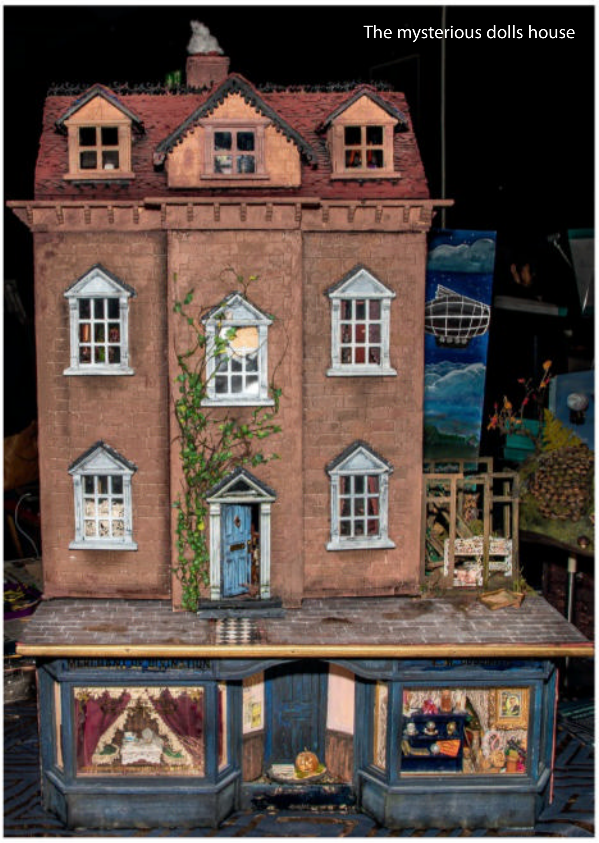
"I've created two internal walls so that it has a hallway leading upstairs. I did struggle with the doors which were neither 1/12th nor 1/16th scale. Since then I've added a large base section which the house sits on. I purchased this not realising that it was for a larger version of a similar house. It only cost £20, so I wasn't too put out!

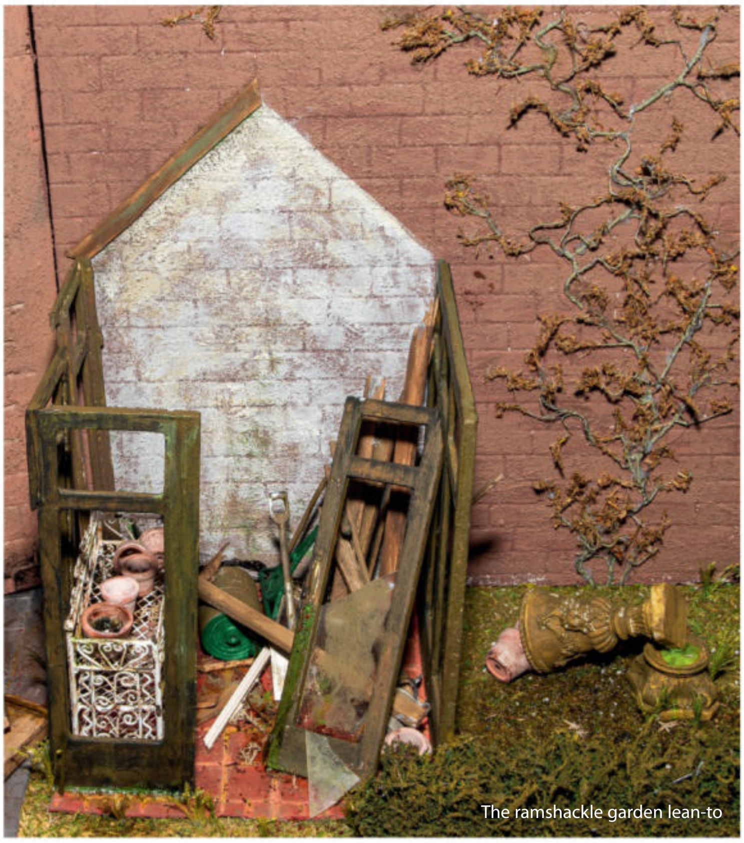
"I decided to create a shop facade under the house that will twin with the mystery house. As the basement only opens from the sides, I will be using the room inside for storage and just decorating the window displays and outside. I've now turned this into a fortune teller's shop."

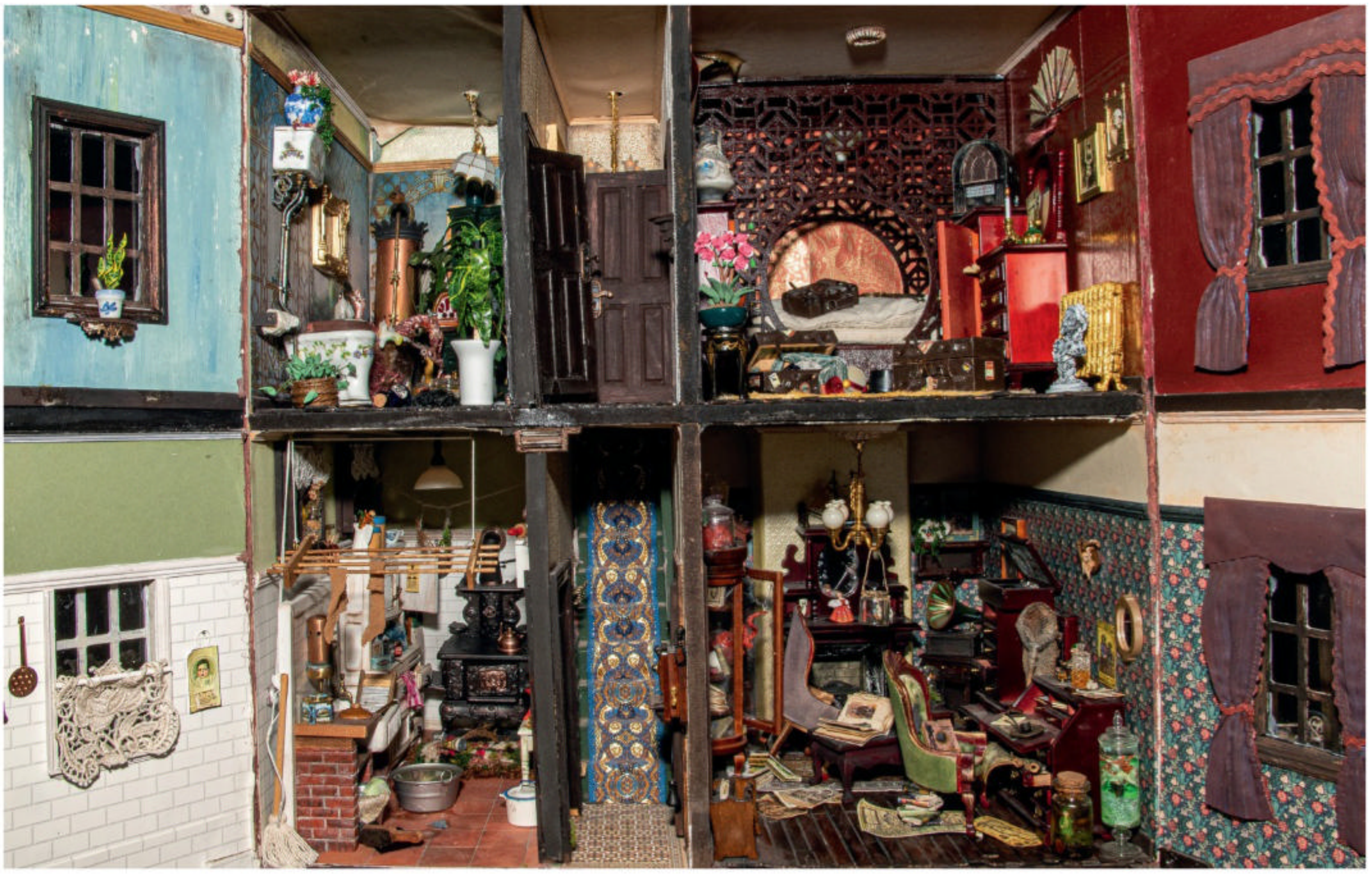
She continued, "As you look around the house, you find that it gives away some of its secrets, such as the music and the record sleeves. And I'm sure people will have spotted the various nods to sideshow and circus performers – and the visitor in the bathroom..."

As for the miniature oil painting of a girl on a zebra, that is indeed her daughter Betsy. "My mum is an oil painter," said Kitten, "and she wanted to make a full-size painting for me, so I asked for a painting of Betsy riding on a zebra and calling to the birds in the forest. Mum did this painting for me, then also made a miniature of the same scene for the dolls house attic."

"I couldn't afford to buy so many items to put in the house, so I've made them – on


The mysterious dolls house


The ramshackle garden lean-to



▲ Two up, two down as you've never seen before

the cheap! For example, the Japanese fan on the wall, was a cocktail umbrella. There is a calendar on the wall. There are old vinyl records in sleeves. I accidentally broke the leg of the chair, so deliberately propped it up with books."

Kitten discovered that she loves adapting dolls house furniture to give it a personal feel. "I scour car boot sales and second-hand sellers online," she said. "I would rather re-purpose and re-use as opposed to going to a specialist shop, but some things you need to purchase new, such as dado rails, cornicing and special pieces."

Another addition to the house is the conservatory at the side of the house. After Kitten had built it, her cat strolled through and broke it. Deciding that the broken conservatory was more in fitting with the house, she added some more damage so now it looks like an abandoned old lean-to.

"I have a rather active imagination and often pin personalities and histories onto inanimate objects, so this house is full of the same. I look at these rooms as almost an artistic interpretation of the inside of my head; way too many thoughts, lists,

▲ Espra Cogsmith's strange bedroom

▲ A mermaid in Espra Cogsmith's bath and a pile of his wet clothes on the floor…

daydreams and eccentric quirkiness for a small space!"

Kitten continued, "This project has been my therapy through Covid. It's helped greatly with my depression of which I've suffered from a young age. I am a vintage singer in my spare time. I missed it very much, not to mention the atmosphere of the events I attended. Care homes were a big part of my performing life and it was a wrench to the heart knowing that people were not getting live entertainment at that time. From WW2 shows to Steampunk madness, you don't realise what an important part of your life something is until you are forced not to do it.

"It has been a joy to create a miniature world to escape to and learn new techniques. I have always enjoyed making things look weathered and aged, so this has been a great excuse!

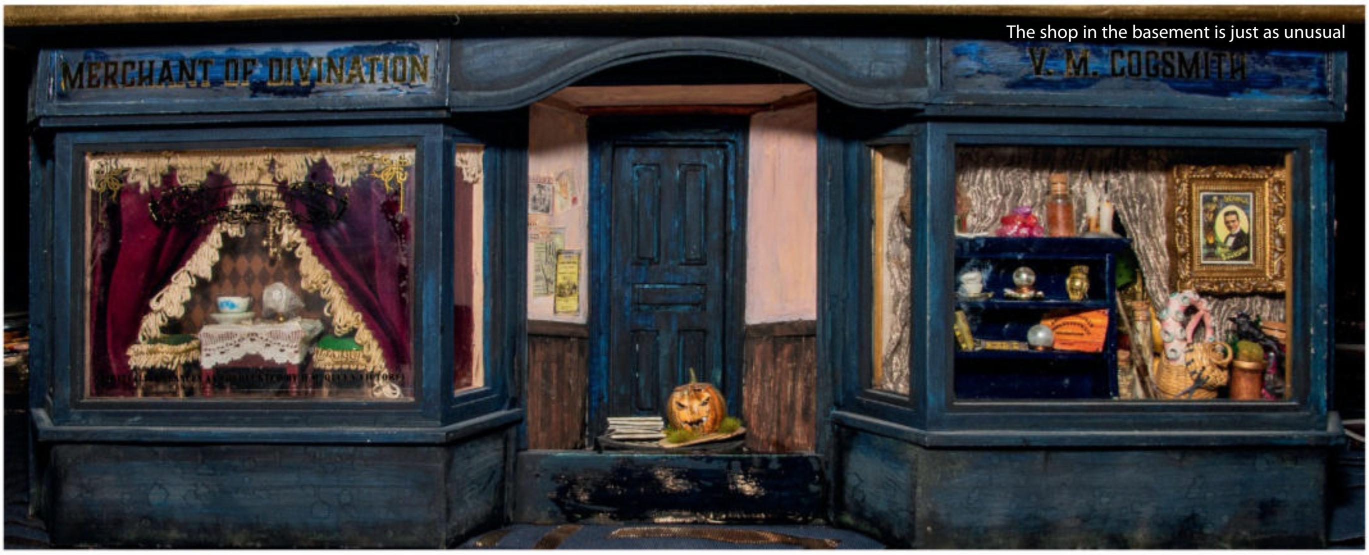
"Weathering items can be so effective for a derelict or 'lived in' feel. And the most important thing is to do some research! Even if it is just looking at a handful of online photos of 'old Victorian dressers.' Searching for images of furniture restoration can be a great source of ideas, as the before images usually show knocks on corners, distressed paintwork and varnish etc. I use an emery board for most of my sanding as it is such small areas and only needs a fine grain. I have nothing fancy; just acrylic paints, tea or coffee for staining and a range of tiny paintbrushes used for nail art.

"Also, think about the age of the piece – have they just bought it new? Has it been in the house for a hundred years? Is it carefully looked after or over-used and much loved? Another thing to ponder is where the item would be rubbed and knocked the most. Corners and edges are obvious. What about cupboard doors? Has a cat been sharpening its claws? Has a mouse eaten away something? Has candle smoke left black marks? What about damp? Create a story in your head about how the owner acquired the piece and about its history. This may all sound very deep and drastic, but it's the little things like this that bring a miniature room to life."

Asked what she's learnt since doing this dolls house, Kitten replied, "Patience is a huge thing I've had to learn during this project. Usually my attitude to crafts is: 'if I can't do it in an hour, I won't do it at all!' I think with everyone in love with creating these, the whole process is a learning curve. I'm far from being an expert, my style isn't to everyone's taste, and some can probably do it far better. But I am proud of my efforts and everything I have learned along the way. As for the dolls house, it is 100% mine, 100% a work in progress and 100% loved."

Cogsmith's kitchen

Kitten Von Mew and her husband Richard



The shop in the basement is just as unusual

MUST-HAVE BOOK THIS MONTH!

In *Modelling and Painting Fantasy Figures*, Paul Stanley demonstrates a variety of modelling and painting techniques at different scales; provides step-by-step guidance on building, converting, repairing and painting figures; explains dry brushing techniques, the three-colour method, multilayering and shading with washes and more…

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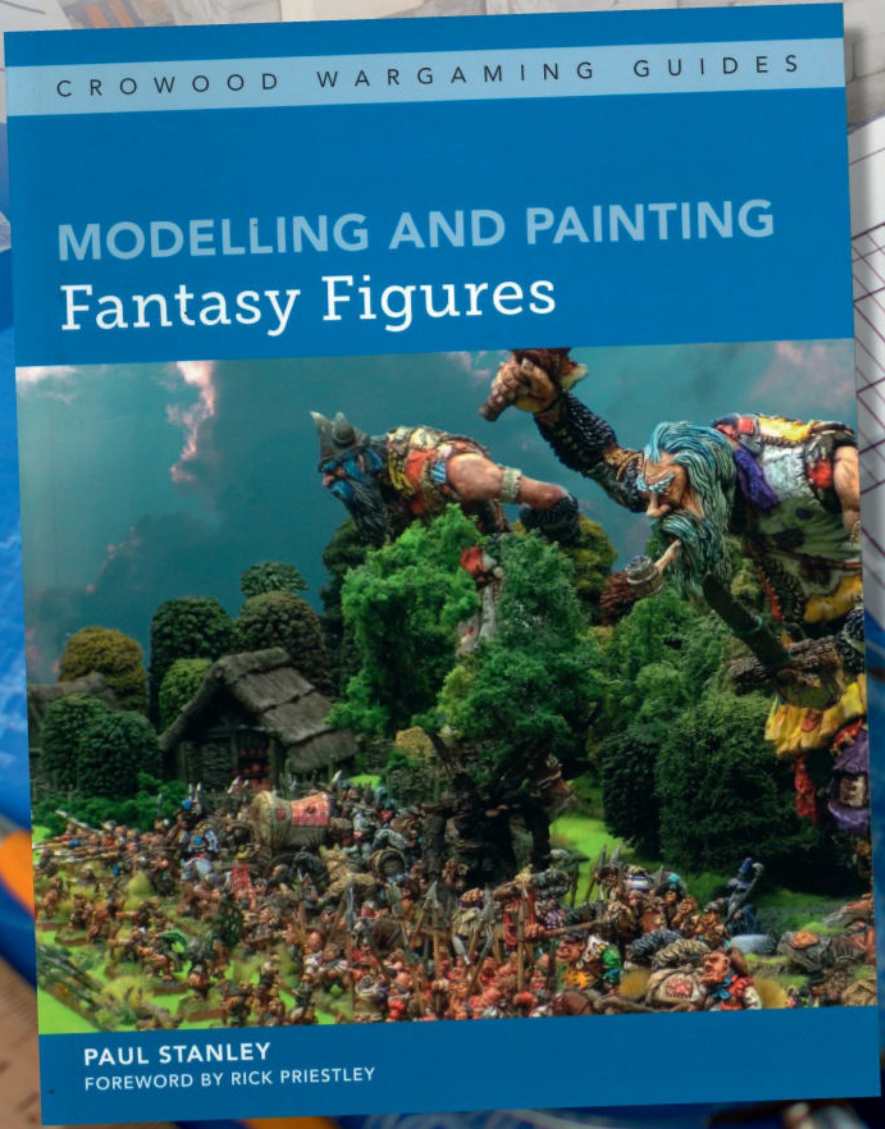

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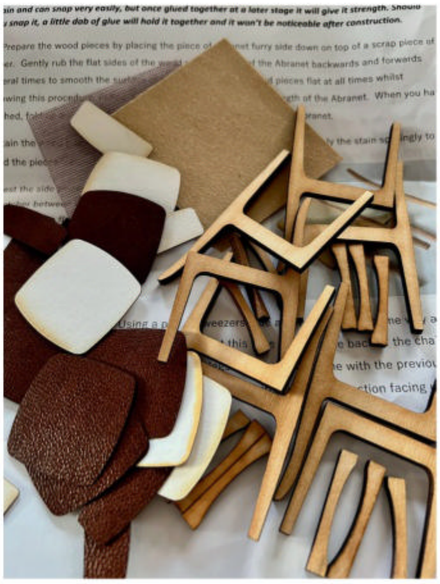
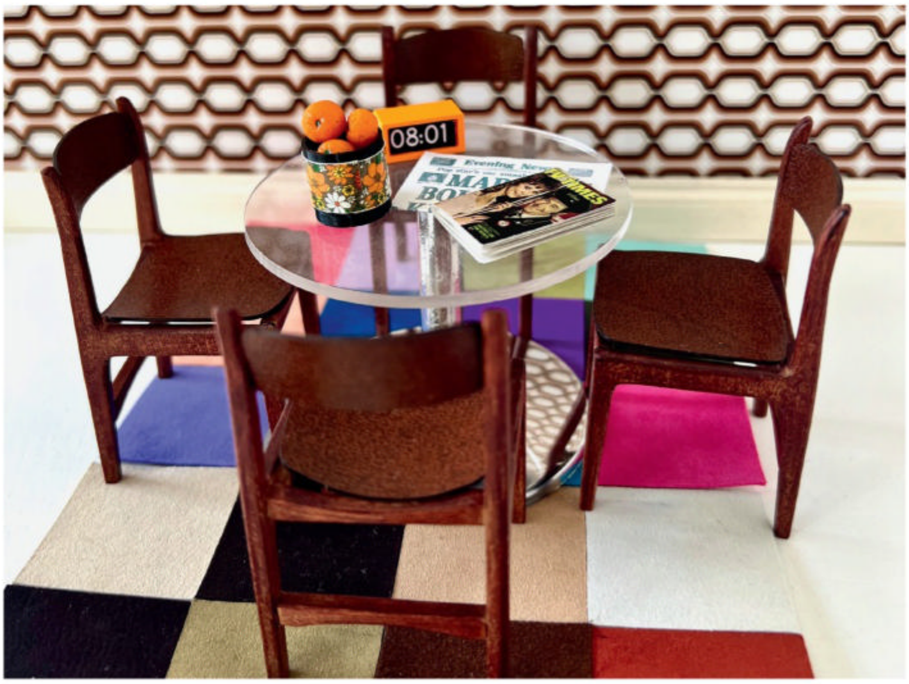
The Whole Kit & Caboodle:

ERIK BUCH CHAIRS

This month's kit miniaturises a mid-century icon.





Moi says...

"Sand the edges of the kit to slightly round off the sharp edges – although avoid sanding the parts that will make contact with glue, as these need a tight fit."

If mid-century modern is your bag, then Jane Harrop should be one of your go-to kit makers. Her affordable, well designed and easy to assemble range of Scandi-inspired designs are perfect for a post-war vibe in miniature.

I selected from Jane's range a set of four teak dining chairs inspired by the Danish furniture designer Erik Buch (1923-1982), who designed iconic pieces that are highly prized today. Jane's kit is so well designed that it requires very little assembly and it's so nice that it uses real wood rather than the more common MDF used in many other laser-cut kits. This means that it takes a wood stain really well and has a lovely grain.

If you plan to do a whole room in mid-century style, you will find many complementary kits in Jane's range, including a matching dining table. Of course, Jane covers many other eras (and scales) – so if your dolls house is Edwardian, Arts and Crafts, Art Deco, or wartime, 1/12th, 1/24th or 1/48th, Jane has a kit that is just perfect!

Moi's Top Tip

"Sand the edges of the kit before staining for a more curvaceous chair."

THE FACTS

Buy from:
Jane Harrop (www.janeharrop.co.uk)

Cost: £15 for all four chairs and £10 for a matching dining table

Comes with:
Wooden frames and leatherette seats and seat backs, plus sandpaper and Abranet

Additional materials needed:
Glue, wood stain and polish or varnish

Specialist tools needed: None

Time: A day, including drying time

Experience: Beginner

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